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CALLICLES AND SOCRATES: PSYCHIC (DIS)HARMONY IN THE *GORGIAS*

RAPHAEL WOOLF

IN this paper I want to offer a new way of looking at Callicles' position in Plato's *Gorgias*, and at the conception of the good life which Socrates presents in return. In particular I want to suggest that these two positions, on the surface radically opposed, have a certain deeper affinity. None the less, Callicles' position contains internal contradictions, as Socrates' does not. This is connected with the fact that Socrates' position is characterized by his advocacy of a theory of psychic harmony, central to which is the holding of consistent beliefs. I shall develop my interpretation by exploring the role of the Socratic method of elenchus within the dialogue, and in particular by assessing its failure when confronted with Callicles. Callicles' conflicts, evidencing his disharmonious soul, are the 'hard case' which reveals the limits of Socratic method. I shall conclude by considering how this lesson is subsequently taken up in the early books of the *Republic*. The education proposed in books 2 and 3 of that work, I shall suggest, both recognizes these limits and seeks to supplement appropriately. Thus it is an attempt to vindicate Socratic method, not supplant it.[1]

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[1] My interpretation here may usefully be compared with that of Dominic Scott ('Platonic Pessimism and Moral Education' ['Platonic Pessimism'], *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 17 (1999), 15–36). Scott's paper, like mine, sees the *Gorgias* (in particular Socrates' encounter with Callicles) as presenting a crisis for Socratic method, a crisis addressed by the educational apparatus of the *Republic*. But within

1. The two Callicles

At *Gorgias* 482 E, towards the beginning of his long opening speech (482 C–486 D), Callicles makes the claim that nature (*φύσις*) and law or convention (*νόμος*) are for the most part opposed to one another (*ἐναντί' ἀλλήλοις*, E 5–6). Socrates has other ideas. At 489 B 2–4 he makes a contrary assertion, that they are not opposed, basing himself on Callicles' own definition (subsequently altered) of those who are 'superior by nature' as 'the stronger'. Callicles, though, never explicitly withdraws his claim (nor Socrates his opposition). I want firstly to suggest that this is in fact a particularly appropriate position for Callicles to hold, since his opening speech (and much of what he says thereafter) reveals him to be a man of contradictions himself, and indeed an accurate reflection in a certain way of the thoroughgoing opposition he sees between nature and convention. Callicles' position, then, has contrary aspects, which I shall represent by the quasi-personal labels 'Callicles 1' and 'Callicles 2'. One side of Callicles (we shall see)—Callicles 1—wants to shatter and override law and convention. The other side—Callicles 2—recommends working within law and convention as the framework for a happy life.

Callicles' opening speech divides fairly naturally into two halves. In its first half (482 C–484 C) Callicles 1 is to the forefront. Callicles says that it is just by nature for the superior to rule the inferior (483 D), adducing as an example of natural justice the behaviour of the kings of Persia in their invasion of smaller countries.[2] The naturally inferior—the majority—get together to make laws, impose equality, and stop the naturally superior having a greater share, which is their natural right (483 B–C). But an individual with a sufficiently strong nature can smash such laws (*καταπατήσας . . . νόμους τοὺς παρὰ φύσιν ἅπαντας*, 484 A 4–5) and do whatever he likes—Callicles cites the example of Hercules, who seized Geryon's cattle where convention would demand that you do not take what is not yours unless it is freely given (484 B–C).

Here, then, is Callicles 1.[3] But in the second half of the speech, the

this broad outline our approaches are rather different: I have tried to present some criticisms of Scott's interpretation in nn. 21, 34, and 44 below.

[2] See n. 8 below.

[3] There is, though, even within this section, a certain tension. Callicles speaks of

rebuke to Socrates (484 C–486 D), Callicles 2 is the leading player. It now emerges that it is a great disadvantage to be unversed in the laws and conventions of one's city (*τῶν νόμων ἄπειροι . . . τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν*, 484 D 2–3)[4] and, generally, in 'human ways' (*τῶν ἀνθρωπείων . . . τῶν ἠθῶν*, D 5–6).[5] The ideal promulgated here is that of being a 'gentleman' (*καλὸν κἀγαθόν*) and a man of good repute (*εὐδόκιμον*) (484 D 1–2). Callicles 2 recommends that we be thoroughly versed in the law, in public affairs, and in business (D 4), since this is what affords us 'life and reputation and many other good things' (486 D 1). On this picture one makes it one's aim to heed, not to smash, law and custom.

This latter ideal is contrasted by Callicles with the life of the philosopher as practised by Socrates. Now note that the philosopher, as portrayed by Callicles, has some affinity with the smasher of laws of 484 A, in attitude towards law and convention. Both would regard the man of conventional good repute praised by Callicles 2 with a certain contempt. Both seek a life outside 'the system', whereas the whole approach of Callicles 2 is based on operating within the system. Callicles 1 seeks to destroy its institutions, the philosopher to live his life so as to have as little to do with them as possible. The latter therefore (according to Callicles) avoids the city centres and spends his life 'whispering in a corner' with boys, destined to live 'without honour' (*ἄτιμον*) in his city (485 D, 486 C).

One way in which to characterize the difference between Callicles 1 and Callicles 2 is perhaps in terms of their need for other people, in particular for other people's good opinion. A main aim of Callicles 2, as we have seen, is the winning and maintaining

helping those whom one cares for (cf. 483 B 4), and later on in the dialogue talks of the ruler giving more to his friends than his enemies (492 C 2–3). Presumably these people one cares for belong to the inferior lot (otherwise they would not have to be *helped* by Callicles). But it is not supposed to be right for such people to have a larger share than others, on Callicles' own account, given their inferiority. That is the preserve of the superior. Callicles' official doctrine of what is right leaves no room for the privileging of any of the inferior people.

[4] Contrast this language with the way Callicles poured scorn on Gorgias and Polus for having been obeisant to human convention (*τὸ ἔθος τῶν ἀνθρώπων*) at 482 D.

[5] This seems a more appropriate translation than the possible, but narrower, 'human characters', since the phrase is used by Callicles to *sum up* (cf. *συλλήβδην*, 484 D 6) the things which one should not be inexperienced in, and they include (D 2–6): laws and conventions, ways of conducting various human transactions, human pleasures and desires—in other words, for Callicles, the range of practices and preferences one finds in human society.

of a good reputation among his fellow citizens. The usurper, by contrast, is unmoved by such considerations, since it is precisely in defiance of conventional opinion that he acts.[6] Both the usurper and the philosopher, then, are uninfluenced by what others think of them, and so each in his different way is a person who aims at integrity, seeking self-realization without the constraint of anyone else's rules.

Now I have spoken of there being a Callicles of contradictions here. It may be thought unreasonable to make this strong claim—that what we have is essentially a 'split personality' with conflicting principles of how life is to be led. I argue, however, that my reading is licensed by the substance of Callicles' speech, which we have been examining, and that any temptation to read it more weakly is to be resisted once we look at some of Socrates' remarks in his immediately preceding speech (481 c–482 c). The subject of these remarks is internal contradiction, and in particular Callicles' own proneness to it. Socrates notes that when one is in love one will agree with whatever one's beloved says, so that if, as in the case of Callicles, one's beloved is constantly changing his opinion, so will the lover, so that from one moment to the next one is contradicting

[6] I think Terence Irwin (*Plato, Gorgias* [*Gorgias*] (Oxford, 1979), 179) is only half right when he says: 'Plato suggests that Callicles cannot maintain his self-respect; his chosen way of achieving his goals makes him depend on the public opinion of the masses he despises.' Similarly Charles Kahn ('Drama and Dialectic in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Drama and Dialectic'], *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 75–121 at 100) sees an 'underlying conflict between Callicles' elitist convictions and his popular aspirations', but regards the gratification of popular taste as merely instrumental for Callicles in the achievement of power (98) (though Kahn does see *Polus* as embodying a stark contradiction between what Kahn calls 'heroic' and 'civic' values, 95–6). I agree that there is the kind of tension in Callicles' position which these authors describe. But I find (and these authors supply) no evidence that Callicles sees ingratiation with popular convention as the *means* by which he will reach his stated aim of overthrowing such convention. Taken at face value, Callicles' speech as a whole is not the setting out of the steps of a 'master plan', but an expression of two separate ideals which he does not try to make cohere, and which in his version of them radically conflict. A reading of Callicles rather closer to mine is that of Arlene Saxonhouse, 'An Unspoken Theme in Plato's *Gorgias*: War', *Interpretation*, 11 (1983), 139–69 at 162. Though her paper has a somewhat different orientation, she in my view quite rightly sees Callicles' speech as setting out two alternative visions, 'on the one hand the superman . . . on the other the political man'. See also Seth Benardete, *The Rhetoric of Morality and Philosophy* (Chicago, 1991), 64, who calls the two parts of Callicles' speech 'not quite consistent with one another' and explains that '[Callicles] uses philosophy to mount an attack on the city in the first part and in the second part attacks philosophy in the name of the city', though the sense in which Benardete takes Callicles to be 'using philosophy' in the first part of his speech (by presenting a theory?) is not made clear.

oneself (481 D ff.). Socrates further suggests that if Callicles cannot refute him, then in asserting a thesis contrary to his, 'Callicles will not agree with you, Callicles' (482 B 5–6).[7] Socrates goes on to state in general terms his own aversion to being internally discordant and speaking things that are contradictory to his own self (482 B–C). Socrates concludes his speech with these observations, and their effect is surely to put us as readers on the alert. We have been primed to go through Callicles' speech with the likelihood of his self-contradiction at the forefront of our minds, so that if the text seems to reveal an inconsistent position on his part, we have been given a large authorial hint to accept it as such.

Let us sum up Callicles' conflicts. Callicles 1 is a would-be smasher of law and convention, an individual acting by his own lights (note the emphatic singularity of *ἔχων ἀνήρ* at 484 A 3)[8], contemptuous of other people's opinion. Callicles 2 rides with the law and conventional principle, and good reputation is highly important to him. I propose to relate this opposition within Callicles to the opposition between *νόμος* and *φύσις* which we have seen Callicles state at 482 E. There seems good reason to do this. After all, Callicles explicitly connects this piece of theorizing to his own ethical view based on the normative supremacy of *φύσις* over *νόμος*, and then, on the other hand, goes on to commend a way of life in which immersion in *νόμος* plays a central role. I suggest, then, that part of the reason why this terminology is here is that it signifies two kinds of human aim or aspiration, and raises the question, via the figure of Callicles (and later of Socrates), of whether their mutual satisfaction is possible. Callicles 2 is the embodiment of *νόμος*—the man of convention and of conventional society, whose ideal is social approval according to conventional norms. Callicles 1, on the other hand, stands for the 'law of nature' (483 E 3), in opposition to the constraints of civic society (E 3–6). He represents the essence of the individual seeking self-realization, a life of complete integrity, free from social restraint and having no need of social approval.

Thus far, *νόμος* and *φύσις* have been presented as mutually op-

[7] This way of speaking of Callicles, as if he were two people, licenses in principle my speaking of 'Callicles 1' and 'Callicles 2'.

[8] For an appreciation of how individualistic Callicles 1 is, note too that his would-be examples of the exercise of natural justice by *states* is actually spelt out in terms of individual rulers of states—Xerxes and Xerxes' father (483 D 6–7), kings of Persia. Their conquests are described collectively: Greece and the Scythians respectively (D 7).

posed, and Callicles is their contradictory embodiment. Callicles' speech is not, of course, the last word on the issue. What it does, though, is invite us to ask whether both these elements are necessary in a complete conception of the good life—Callicles, after all, is pulled in both of their directions—and, if so, whether they are reconcilable, so that they might both be advocated as part of a coherent ethical theory. Is there, at best, a compromise required between being oneself and getting along with others? Socrates, I suggest, will urge that *νόμος* and *φύσις* are not irreconcilable elements (so that his claim to this effect at 489 B is not merely *ad hoc*). He will offer us a model of the good life in which both elements play a role, but in which they are perfectly compatible. The presence of both elements means, however, that at the most basic level there is no dispute here between Socrates and Callicles (at least when the two sides of Callicles are taken together) on what are the fundamental human goods.

2. Socrates for and against Callicles

When Callicles subsequently spells out in more detail the ideal of Callicles 1, it turns out that the good life according to nature consists in the maximization and satisfaction of one's appetites (*ἐπιθυμίαι*) (491 E ff.). It is important to recognize that in his reply to Callicles 1 Socrates never challenges the basic assumption that seeking one's inner fulfilment (in some way or other) is an important human aspiration. He never, that is, challenges the basic presupposition that underlies Callicles 1's conception of the good life. What he rather does is to challenge Callicles 1's worked-out view of what the meeting of this aspiration consists in. In fact Socrates' initial approach is not to try to meet Callicles 1 head on at all, but to show how his values conflict with those expressed by Callicles 2. Here too it is not the basic presupposition of Callicles 2 that he challenges, namely that good social relations may be of value, but, again, its more detailed working out, which is that they are to be achieved by going with the grain of conventional norms, whatever these may happen to be. In the *Gorgias* Socrates is firmly of the view that social relations may be of ethical significance, but this view, I shall argue, is grounded on the further view that one's good relations with others flow from one's having harmonious internal

relations within oneself (one's soul). One's internal relations have primacy for Socrates, so that the possession of harmonious internal relations will be both valuable in itself and a necessary condition of harmonious relations with others.

Thus it is not only Callicles 1 and the philosopher as portrayed by Callicles who have no time for the kind of insincere ingratiation on which Callicles 2 relies to achieve his aim of conventional good repute. This route is rejected by Socrates himself. He will urge Callicles (at any rate the side of him which Callicles 2 represents) to reject, as he does himself, conventional honours (cf. *χαίρειν οὖν ἐάσας τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων*, 526 D 5–6). And this is part of the way that Socrates portrays himself very much as an outsider relative to his society throughout the dialogue—as a 'one against the many' (see e.g. 471 E ff.). Like Callicles 1, who also portrays himself in these terms (cf. e.g. 483 B with 484 A),[9] he will oppose his society to maintain his integrity. He would rather most people disagree with him than that he should be at odds with himself (482 B 7–C 3). Thus Socrates will portray the life in pursuit of conventional honours as a life of servility, in which one sacrifices one's own integrity for the sake of conforming with other people (512 E–513 C), a life of flattery and ingratiation (e.g. 513 C–E, 521 A–B). Socrates seeks to make Callicles recoil at the idea of conforming blindly to other people's values in order to win their approval, and even succeeds in winning Callicles' acknowledgement that his pejorative description of such a life is a fair one (521 B 2–3).

It is no surprise, then, that Socrates should seize on the conventional norms of Callicles 2 to show how the worked-out positions of the two sides of Callicles conflict. This policy first emerges when Callicles is attempting to explain what Callicles 1 meant by 'the naturally superior' who, he claims, should rule and exploit the naturally inferior (cf. 483 D). At 489 C Callicles is led to deny that what was meant was the physically stronger. If this were so, he says, 'a pack of slaves and all kinds of worthless men' (C 4–5) might be rightful rulers. Now what Callicles seems to be objecting to here is less the numerosity of this band, which might indeed be an affront to the radical individualism of Callicles 1, than its *status*. But Callicles 1 would be far from rejecting the idea that a slave should rise up in revolt—indeed, it is precisely as a slave rising up to be-

[9] Notice too how Socrates, with Callicles' authority, sees the position of the would-be Calliclean usurper as a one against the many at 488 D 5–8.

come master that he speaks of the actions of the usurper at 484 A. For Callicles 2, however, this subversion of the social and political norm would be anathema. The form of Callicles' rejection here brings out a clear tension between the world-views of Callicles 1 and Callicles 2.

A similar tension dogs Callicles in the discomfiture he comes to feel over his next definition of 'superior' as 'wiser' (490 A). Socrates says that if the ruler is wiser he might distribute material goods on an 'each according to his need' principle, so that if the ruler himself happens to be the smallest he will get the smallest ration of food (490 C). Socrates then succeeds in communicating a sense of absurdity to Callicles at the idea that the ruler should instead get the lion's share of material goods regardless (D–E). But surely Callicles 1 would not balk at this suggestion—maximization of one's appetites and commensurate satisfaction thereof are given by Callicles as just the description of the good life of Callicles 1's naturally superior man (491 E–492 A; cf. 494 B–C). So it is Callicles 2, whose value system is one of honour and reputation, who is unhappy with the idea that possession of base material goods should be treated as the measure of a person's superiority.

Turning to the discussion of pleasure and the good at 494 B ff., we see Callicles getting into difficulties once again, this time when Socrates asks him whether a man can be happy scratching or living the life of a catamite (494 E). Now it is hard to see why Callicles 1 should have a particular problem with this. His aim, after all, is to rise above convention and be free to satisfy whatever appetites he may have. It is Callicles 2 who is shocked (cf. 494 E 7–8). Formally, Callicles maintains that pleasure and good are the same. At first he says he does so in order to avoid contradicting himself (495 A 5–6), which already provides a clear indication that there is a genuine tension within Callicles' position. Then he decides that he will instead 'strongly affirm' (*ἰσχυρίζεσθαι*, cf. B 8–9) the thesis. So Callicles says within a few lines that he both strongly affirms the thesis and is only maintaining it to avoid contradicting himself. This schizophrenic attitude is accounted for by the fact that one side of Callicles (Callicles 1) does indeed strongly affirm the thesis, but the other (Callicles 2) rejects it. Callicles 2 will have no truck with lives which, by contrast, would be definitive of Callicles 1's position, lives which defy convention and scorn other people's opinion.

Callicles' conventional scruples, then, clearly sit ill with the man who would trample on convention. But Callicles 2 is not as negligible as he may appear on the surface. His ethics, embedded in the ideal of conventional approval, can be seen as a manifestation of the basic human need to be a social animal—to belong. Socrates, as we have seen, will have no truck with Callicles 2's particular *modus operandi*, since it involves insincere pandering and threatens one's integrity. Yet in the exchanges between Callicles and Socrates I shall attempt to show that Socrates himself puts a high value on good relations with others, and sees living harmoniously in (and with) society as an ingredient in his overall conception of the good life. For Socrates in the *Gorgias*, the maintenance both of one's integrity and of good relations with others is of value. To this extent he has no dispute with Callicles. Callicles' conflicts, with himself and with Socrates, arise at the level of the more detailed working out of these two basic principles. And I shall be suggesting how Socrates, by making a priority of one's (harmonious) internal relations, thinks each aim can be fulfilled without fatally compromising the other.[10]

3. Oneself alone?

The first point that Socrates makes in his opening remarks to Callicles (481 C ff.) is indicative of his view that man has a social dimension. He notes that people have experiences (*πάθη*) that are not unique to a particular person, and are therefore communicable.

[10] My interpretation of Socrates' position in the *Gorgias* may have some bearing on the well-known controversy surrounding his seemingly conflicting approaches to the law as between the *Apology* and *Crito*. Thus Socrates claims at *Ap.* 29 C–D that he would disobey an Athenian jury rather than stop philosophizing, whereas in the *Crito* (50 A ff.) he has the personified Laws argue that the law should not be disobeyed. Various attempts (which I cannot discuss here) have been made to resolve the conflict, including denials that there is one at all. The methodology I have in mind is well exemplified by Richard Kraut (*Socrates and the State* (Princeton, 1984), 12), who states with regard to this issue that 'If possible, the *Crito* ought to be interpreted in a way that makes it consistent with the *Apology*.' My suggestion is that, as with the two parts of Callicles' speech, we take these two passages at face value: each represents a distinct facet of Socrates' outlook—ideally he would both philosophize *and* respect the law. These facets threaten to come into conflict in the society and situation in which he finds himself (as portrayed by these two dialogues): there is no need to 'paper over the cracks' here. Socrates' theorizing in the *Gorgias* is an attempt to show how these facets need not conflict, a project which (as we shall see) depends on creating a society of a certain sort by creating souls of a certain sort.

We find out at 481 D that Socrates, like Callicles, is in love. This non-unique *πάθος* Socrates feels for Alcibiades and philosophy, Callicles for Demos the young man and the Athenian popular assembly (*δῆμος*). And the power of love is a theme of Socrates' subsequent remarks. As we noted earlier, Socrates observes how the lover may be inclined to agree with whatever his beloved says, however inconsistent this may make him. Here, then, is a variation on a now familiar theme—that there may be a tension between maintaining one's own integrity and one's relations with others. But Socrates suggests that this is not a necessary tension. If one loves philosophy (as Socrates does), then one will follow philosophy, which is consistent, rather than contradict oneself at the whim of one's human loves (482 A–B). Note, then, that there is a certain ordering in Socrates' position here. The suggestion is that Socrates' deepest love is for philosophy, which he singles out as his special 'darling' (*τὰ ἐμὰ παιδικά*, 482 A 4). This is not, of course, love for another person but (as depicted) love for consistency, in particular as a feature of one's own internal state. So self-consistency is Socrates' priority (as 482 B–C confirms). But Socrates does not suggest that this makes love for other people eliminable or (in itself) undesirable.[11] Rather, Socrates, as philosophy's paradigm lover, portrays himself as being able to maintain his love for Alcibiades (who is as inconstant in what he says as they come: 482 A 6–7) without compromising his own integrity.[12]

Callicles himself, we soon learn, in addition to having his two loves, is also part of a *κοινωνία*, a group of like-minded friends who discuss philosophy and the (limited) extent to which it should be cultivated (487 C). And the theme of friendship is a clear refrain in the early exchanges between Socrates and Callicles.[13] Socrates

[11] The extent to which Plato's views on love leave room for love of the individual person (as opposed to love of more abstract objects) has been keenly debated (though the *Gorgias* tends to get rather overlooked). See e.g. Anthony Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1989), 43–54, 97–102; Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge, 1986), 165–233; Gregory Vlastos, 'The Individual as Object of Love in Plato', in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, 1973), 3–34.

[12] As we can see from Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium* (215 A ff., esp. 219 D–E), Socrates' love for Alcibiades seems to have been more than reciprocated, because of rather than in spite of Socrates' maddening refusal to compromise his integrity.

[13] For a brief but apposite discussion of the role of friendship in the *Gorgias* see Roger Duncan, '*Philia* in the *Gorgias*', *Apeiron*, 8 (1974), 23–5. Duncan notes the tension that Callicles' acknowledgement of friendship creates in his account of the good life.

calls Callicles 'my dear companion' (*ὦ φίλε ἑταῖρε*) at 482 A 5. In reply Callicles says that he regards Socrates in a friendly manner (485 E) and feels good will towards him, points which Socrates accepts (487 D–E; though cf. 499 C). Gorgias and Polus, his earlier interlocutors in the dialogue, Socrates also regards as his friends (487 A–B). Later Socrates concedes the importance in principle of helping one's friends and family (508 C, 509 B), picking up Callicles' similar point of 483 B and 486 B. He also twice addresses Callicles 'in the name of Friendship' (*πρὸς Φιλίου*: 500 B, 519 E).

This stress on good relations with others Socrates then uses to attack the ideal of Callicles 1. In so doing, he not only appeals (as he did earlier) to the social side of Callicles' nature, but reveals his own hand as well. Thus at 507 E 3 Socrates describes the life of unrestraint (*ἀκολασία*) advocated by Callicles 1 as the life of a pirate, and calls it 'endless evil' (*ἀνήνυτον κακόν*). And why is such a life an endless evil? Because, Socrates says, a person who lives like this cannot have friendship with any other person (*οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ προσφιλὴς ἂν εἴη ὁ τοιοῦτος*, E 3–4), or indeed with god. This is Socrates' last word against Callicles 1,[14] and also illustrates, by his calling the friendless life an endless evil, his own advocacy of friendly relations with others. Now we have seen that Socrates is in fact out of temper with most people in his current society. Hence his warnings to Callicles not to become too much like, indeed too friendly with (*προσφιλής*, 513 A 3), the Athenian *δῆμος* at 512 E ff. So here again Socrates' ordering is clear—friendship is not to be had if the price is the corruption of one's own soul (cf. 510 B–C with 511 A). But he none the less has in view as an ideal a kind of universal brotherhood—the *Gorgias* ends with his appeal to Callicles that they practise goodness together (*κοινῇ*, 527 D 2) and invite all others (*τοὺς ἄλλους*, E 5) to practise it too.[15]

The friendless life, then, is rejected. On the other hand, Callicles 2 wants to be friends with everyone—but at the cost, it seems,

[14] Socrates has also attacked Callicles 1 on something more akin to the latter's own terms, i.e. without appealing to social considerations, at 504 B–505 B (compare also the 'jar' analogies of 493 A–494 A), where he argues that the life of unrestraint being proposed will prevent one having a good—i.e. well-structured—soul. I consider further this aspect of Socrates' position below.

[15] Notice, though, that Socrates does not say that the practice of goodness is essentially a shared activity. Socrates also speaks of Callicles in the singular practising goodness (527 D 2). Indeed, Socrates suggests that the practice of goodness is prior to its practice in a social or political context (cf. *κἄπειτα . . . τότε ἤδη*, D 2–3). I examine this Socratic ordering further below.

of his own integrity. It is pretty clear by now that Callicles 1, since deprived of friendship, is seen by Socrates as unable in principle to live a completely good life, aside from the fact that such a character will in any case have a disharmonious soul.[16] Yet Callicles 2, in seeking to please people and win their approval, lives the life of a flatterer, a fact ultimately conceded by Callicles at 521 B 2. So Socrates criticizes Callicles 1 for (*inter alia*) lacking friends, and Callicles 2 for lacking integrity.[17] The onus, then, is on Socrates to describe a life in which one can maintain both one's integrity and one's good relations with others. I shall now argue that this is just what he does.

The key, perhaps, is to look at Socrates' conception here of what it is for something to be good. At 502 E–503 D Socrates distinguishes a kind of politician who aims at making the citizens—that is to say, their souls[18]—as good as possible. This involves skill (*τέχνη*, 503 D 1). At 503 D–504 A he proceeds to outline what all craftsmen who aim at the best must do, namely to impose form (*εἶδος*, E 4) on whatever one is working on. This means fitting together each of its parts into a structure (*τάξις*) and making the parts harmonize (*ἁρμόττειν*) with one another, thus imposing an orderly and structured constitution on the whole. So by implication the task for the politician who aims at the best is to make the souls of the citizens as harmonious and well structured as possible (cf. 504 B). This is better for the soul itself (cf. 505 B 7), and thus for the citizen whose soul it is. So here we have, first, a quite general theory of what it is for something to be good, and that is for that thing to have a harmonious, well-ordered structure. And second, there is an application of that theory to persons seen in terms of their souls: it is good for a person to have a harmonious, well-structured soul, and bad for a person to have the opposite (506 E–507 A). Socrates then highlights the un-

[16] See n. 14 above.

[17] In fact Socrates' tactics are just as Callicles had complainingly described them at 483 A 3–4 with regard to Socrates' treatment of Polus and Gorgias, namely asking a question in terms of *φύσις* when the interlocutor is speaking in terms of *νόμος*, and vice versa. But the tactic is perfectly fair when the interlocutor himself is espousing both *νόμος* and *φύσις* in such a way that they contradict (as Callicles does, and holds that they do). Socrates defends himself quite precisely at 489 B when he denies that he does this in the knowledge that they contradict—he of course holds that they do not (B 2–6).

[18] Socrates, as standardly, identifies what is best for one with what is best for one's soul. See e.g. within the same context the unsignalled shift from talk of what is best for the citizens to talk of what is best for their souls at 503 A 7–8.

restraint advocated by Callicles 1 as a mark of the disorderly soul, and claims, as we have seen, that such a person can be friends with no other (507 A, D–E). Such a person can have no society (*κοινωνία*, 507 E 5) or friendship (*φιλία*, ibid.) with others. Socrates then adds that these two things and orderliness (*κοσμιότης*)—as well as justice and temperance—are what hold heaven and earth and gods and people, and indeed the whole cosmos, together, a theory which he (merely) attributes to wise men, but shows no sign of quarrelling with himself (507 E 6–508 A 2).[19]

Notice that Socrates is using a certain principle in his analysis here which I shall refer to as a principle of construction. One whose soul is disorderly tends to manifest that disorder in a piratical way of life whose consequence is the impossibility of good social relations with others. So what is explaining, in Socrates' theory, the impossibility of society or good order *between* people is lack of order *within* individual souls, of which Callicles 1-type behaviour is a manifestation. This in turn suggests that a harmonious, well-ordered society is (must be) constructed out of harmonious, well-ordered souls, since a disharmonious society will be disharmonious if it should contain disharmonious souls within it. This, then, is a 'bottom-up' theory. Conditions at the macro level are to be explained by conditions at the micro level, the level of the individual—thus Socrates' theory is, from this point of view, an individualistic one.[20] Further-

[19] So in the *Republic* every member of the ideal society will be friends (*φίλοι*) with one another (9, 590 D 5–6). At the opposite extreme, the tyrannical man's life (one which looks much like that recommended by Callicles 1) is rejected as being friendless (9, 576 A 4; cf. the ironical 8, 567 E 8–568 A 1, on the tyrant's 'friends'). It seems reasonable to infer from these remarks that philosopher-kings themselves will value friendship and society in a broad sense, notwithstanding their envisaged reluctance to re-enter the Cave (7, 519 C–521 B)—i.e. to participate in their society. In fact in the latter passage Socrates emphasizes that philospher-kings will be living in a society which has nurtured them as such (520 B). Contrast the long lament of 6, 487 B–497 A, where philosophers in contemporary society are portayed as living relatively impoverished lives in virtue of the fact that they are not valued by their societies (esp. 496 D–497 A). For Socrates one does not fully flourish as a human being unless one participates in a society in which one is valued and appreciated.

[20] This point is relevant to Christopher Gill's claim (*Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy* [*Personality*] (Oxford, 1996), esp. 8–23) that ancient Greek ethical writers (Plato included, though Gill says disappointingly little about the early dialogues) tend to espouse a 'participant' ethics (which Gill contrasts with 'individualist' conceptions), such that the good life is centred around 'participation in interpersonal and communal relationships' (8). But in the *Gorgias* it seems clear that for Socrates such relationships, valuable though they are, are grounded in states of individual souls which are independently valuable for the individuals concerned; and that, as we have seen, if faced with the choice between being a lone wolf with

more, it will be the structure of each individual (soul), as something over and above its individual parts, that will make a soul good. But well-structured souls, as the parts of a well-structured society, do not then require any further structuring in relation to one another, to be such. There is no indication that any further complexity is to be introduced to explain social conditions at the macro level.

One may conclude from this that for Socrates here there are two basic goods for a person—and these I shall term his two principles of the good life. First, it is good for one to have a harmoniously structured soul, as it is good for anything to have an orderly structure; this is something which would be a good for one independently of social considerations. This first good, I suggest, represents Socrates' conception of integrity or self-realization; and I shall have more to say about this later on. But second, it is good for one to have, or to be, a well-structured soul as part of a community of well-structured souls. Socrates' emphasis on friendship (and his antipathy to friendlessness) has made it clear that this second principle is part of his full conception of the good life.

Now an appreciation of this second principle helps to explain why Socrates is concerned with social and political activity in the *Gorgias* at all, at least to the extent that this seems to involve promoting the good of other people. If we were to suppose that having one's soul well structured were the only component in his conception of the good life, then the role of such other-directed behaviour would be rather unclear. For there is no suggestion that such behaviour is seen as a cause of his own soul being well structured. But far from eschewing social and political activity, Socrates ends the dialogue espousing it (527 D–E). He urges, as we have seen, that he and Callicles practise goodness together. He says that then they might consider turning to politics (D 3–4); and they should certainly encourage others to be good (E 5–6). More strikingly still, Socrates has already claimed at 521 D–E that he is the only true politician currently around in Athens, on the grounds that he alone is concerned with what is best for the citizens, in what he says to them.

Why should Socrates be concerned with the good of other people? Against the background of his second principle, his interest becomes more intelligible. We know that promoting another person's

integrity and a participant without, Socrates will opt for the former. In view of this, I doubt that Socratic ethics can be labelled 'participant', notwithstanding that Socrates' ideal is integrity *with* participation.

good involves promoting the good of that person's soul; and this will mean making it well structured. This is certainly good for the person concerned (by Socrates' first principle of the good life). But by his second principle it is also good for Socrates. Socrates wants other people to have well-structured souls because he wants the friendship which obtains when one is a member of a well-structured community. And, by his principle of construction, such a community is built out of the structures within the individual souls of those who take part in it. So his promotion of the harmonious structure of another person's soul is at the same time a promotion of the construction of a well-structured community.

Furthermore, there is evidently no conflict here between Socrates' two principles of the good life—that is, there is no conflict between the promotion of the harmonious structure of one's own soul and the promotion of the construction of a well-structured community. For again, by the principle of construction, in promoting the harmonious structure of my own soul, I am fulfilling a necessary condition for the construction of that community in which I wish to participate. This does, however, suggest (as I argued earlier) a certain ordering between the two principles. For it is not so evident how the promotion of the harmonious structure of other people's souls, although perfectly compatible with it, necessarily contributes to promoting the harmonious structure of my own, however much it does promote my participating in a community of well-structured souls. Now such an ordering is quite consistent with some other things that Socrates himself says. At 514 D he states that a potential doctor should consider his own health (or whether he has treated others privately, D 7–8; but the question of one's own health is placed first) before attempting to practise medicine publicly. This is presented as an analogy with the politician and the treatment of souls, which is what Socrates turns to at 515 A. So although the issue of one's own condition is not explicitly mentioned at 515 A, we are no doubt supposed to carry forward the thought from 514 D. In similar vein, when Callicles speaks of ruling others at 491 D, Socrates suggests he should first consider the question of ruling oneself, which will eventually turn into the question of whether one's own soul should be orderly or disorderly. Socrates, then, consistently ranks in this way consideration of one's internal relations (the structure within one's own soul) over consideration of one's ex-

ternal relations (one's relations with other people). Each, however, is a necessary component in Socrates' full conception of the good life.

We have seen in general terms what Socrates' conception of the good life is, and how it may be achieved in a way that avoids conflict between its two components. At the same time we may observe that in their fundamentals Socrates' and Callicles' conceptions are not opposed. Both agree that maintaining both one's integrity and one's good relations with others are important ingredients in the good life. It is the working out of these principles which is different, and which causes Callicles his conflicts.[21] For Socrates, the first element is represented by having a harmoniously structured soul, the second by being part of a harmoniously structured community (that is, a community of harmoniously structured souls). For Callicles, the first is represented by the maximization and satisfaction

[21] It is, I think, fair to say that Callicles' position has been standardly conceived of as 'very extreme' (in the words of Nicholas White, 'Rational Prudence in Plato's *Gorgias*', in D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Platonic Investigations* (Washington, 1985), 139–62 at 139). But is it? I have argued that this 'very extreme' position is thoroughly grounded in a highly general and plausible conception of human goods. Moreover, to focus on Callicles' supposed extremity is to ignore the fact that Socrates himself damns Callicles' position for its inconsistency, not its extremity. Indeed, the only position portrayed as something like 'extreme' within the dialogue itself is not Callicles' but Socrates'—by Callicles: it will 'turn human life upside down' (481 C 3–4). By contrast, Socrates portrays Callicles' position as representing 'what everyone else thinks, but is unwilling to say' (492 D 2–3). We are actually being invited to regard Socrates' worked-out views as more radical (or 'extreme'), relative to everyday thought and practice, than Callicles' (see n. 22 below). By the same token it is an oversimplification to regard Callicles as 'the very antithesis to Socrates' (to quote, as a representative view, Chris Rocco, 'Liberating Discourse: The Politics of Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*', *Interpretation*, 23 (1996), 361–85 at 369), given that (so I have argued) Callicles and Socrates share basic values, despite the surface differences. Another recent exponent of what might broadly be termed the 'traditional' view of the relation between Callicles and Socrates is Scott ('Platonic Pessimism', 27), who seems to regard their opposition as characterized by a Socrates of correct views failing to persuade an intransigent interlocutor out of his wrong views. But it is as an opposition between consistent and inconsistent views, not (straightforwardly) correct and wrong ones, that Socrates chooses to describe the difference at the outset of their debate. An interpretation of Socrates somewhat closer to mine is that of Kahn ('Drama and Dialectic', 96), in so far as he states that 'It was one of Socrates' greatest achievements to reshape these two conceptions [of "heroic" and "civic" values respectively: cf. n. 6 above] into a new and consistent moral ideal.' However, a few lines later Kahn claims that Socrates' position is founded on the latter as opposed to the former conception, and presents Callicles as a proponent of the former conception as opposed to the latter, which looks more like a version of the 'traditional' reading.

of one's own appetites, the second by conformity to other people's conventions.[22]

Socrates, though, not only sets out his ideal, but claims to be the only true politician in Athens, which by his own account of what the good politician does will mean that he alone is in the business of promoting harmoniously structured souls. That is, he not only advocates a position, but claims to have a method for bringing it about. I shall shortly be taking up the question of how he thinks he is able to do this, which, in turn, will shed further light on the relation between Callicles' position and Socrates'. First, however, I want to consider Socrates' position from a slightly different perspective, which is necessary if we are to assess it properly as a response to Callicles.

4. Justice and happiness

We might concede to Socrates that it is good for a person to have a well-structured soul (or mind), conceived of in terms of harmonious relations (lack of conflict) between its various components. In promoting the good structure of another person's soul, then, we might accept that I am benefiting that person. But Socrates is making an additional claim, that not only am I benefiting that person in so doing, but I am making his soul *just*. The claim is that a well-ordered soul is a just soul (see 504 C–D). And this is a necessary claim for Socrates to make if he is fully to meet Callicles' challenge. For Callicles claimed not just that the maximization and satisfaction of one's appetites promoted the good life for the person able to do this, but that this was just (by nature) as well (491 E 7; cf. 483 D 1–2). Callicles, then, is incorporating a conception of justice

[22] It may be asked why it should not be open to Callicles to construct an 'ideal society' in which these two elements were not in conflict—for example, one in which the Calliclean 'superman' was admired by his society. Socrates' view seems to be that it is simply not possible for such a person to be genuinely liked or admired *within* a society (as opposed to, perhaps, feared); so good social relations cannot obtain between such a person and others, notwithstanding the tacit popular view (on Socrates' account) that such a person's life would be enviable (cf. 492 D 2–3 and n. 21 above). It is noteworthy that it is Socrates, not Callicles, who seems to regard popular values as not so different from those of Callicles 1. This contrast may reflect the fact that those values themselves are 'split-level': best to be a Callicles 1 if one can (this is what generates Socrates' remark at 492 D 2–3); given that most of us cannot, best to operate a more egalitarian system (this is what generates part of the tension between Callicles 1 and his society).

into his view of the good life, such that the realization of that life will embody (as far as Callicles is concerned) a just state of affairs. If Socrates fails to do the same, he is not meeting Callicles on his own terms.

The question, then, is: how reasonable is Socrates' claim that a well-ordered soul is a just soul?[23] (I shall not consider here the merits of Callicles' view of justice.) I shall attempt to answer this question by considering a couple of objections that might be made against the claim. The first objection might be formulated in terms of self-interest, and would run as follows: when Socrates speaks of making a person's soul good for that person (i.e. well structured), he is illegitimately helping himself to the conclusion that this is to make that person's soul good for other people (i.e. just). There is either a (fatal) equivocation on 'good' here, or an unsupported assumption that my good is identical with yours. I submit that, on my interpretation of Socrates' position, this objection fails.[24] Socrates has suggested (his second principle of the good life) that it is good for a person to live in a harmoniously structured society. But such a society, by his principle of construction, is constructed out of individual souls whose internal relations are themselves harmonious. And *this*, as we have seen, is why promoting the good order of an-

[23] This issue has an obvious affinity with the question that has often been raised about the relation between justice and happiness in *Republic* 4, in particular whether there is a satisfactory explanation there of how a person's having psychic harmony might (in general) be in the interests of other people and (in particular) make such a person recognizably just. As far as I am aware, no solution of the type I shall be offering has been suggested for either the *Gorgias* or the *Republic*. A recent discussion of this vexed aspect of *Republic* 4 is Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* [*Ethics*] (Oxford, 1995), 256–61, with 385 n. 10 for earlier references. It is a nice question whether psychic structure in the *Republic* merely *parallels* social structure, or (as I am claiming for the *Gorgias*) is actually its basis, as is perhaps suggested by 4, 435 E–436 A, on which see Gregory Vlastos, 'Justice and Happiness in the *Republic*', *Platonic Studies*, 111–39 at 123–4, opposed by e.g. John Cooper, 'The Psychology of Justice in Plato', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 14 (1977), 151–7 at 152–3. Cf. also *Rep.* 4, 423 D 2–6, which seems to imply that the unity of the state will depend on the unity of its individual citizens. I do not discuss this question further here (though cf. n. 30 below), but on it will turn the question of whether the 'constructivist' approach to the problem, adopted here for the *Gorgias*, is applicable to the *Republic* too.

[24] It is standardly assumed that this kind of objection holds. See e.g. Irwin, *Gorgias*, 236 ad 517 B: 'Socrates must assume that the politician produces . . . qualities promoting a citizen's own good . . . It must be in the politician's own interest to do this . . . but Socrates has not shown *why* it is' (emphasis added). My claim is that Socrates does have a theory which shows why promoting someone else's good might be in one's own interest.

other person's soul is in fact in my interest, since it is a step in the construction of a well-ordered society, being part of which is a good for me.

On this view, Socrates does not simply help himself to the notion that by bringing about something that is good (for you) I am bringing about something that is good (for me). He neither equivocates on 'good' here, nor makes an unsupported assumption that there is an identity between my good and yours. Rather, he offers us two principles—his second principle of the good life, and the principle of construction—from which he can validly infer that if I promote the harmonious structure of another person's soul, then I am also acting in my own interest. If we want to attack this conclusion, we must attack the truth of the content of the two principles. That is, we must either deny that it is a good for one to be part of a well-structured society, or we must deny that promoting the harmonious structure of others' souls has anything to do with the construction of such a society. Opposition to Socrates' position must be based on substantive ethical argument, not the accusation of logical foul play.[25]

None the less, there is a further objection against Socrates' position that might be made, concerning specifically his use of the term 'just'. The objection might run: granted that Socrates makes a substantive case for his thesis that if I make another person's soul well structured then I benefit myself; even so, why call that person's soul just? A just person (the objection runs) must be such as to act justly, but Socrates has not shown (though he does claim: see 507 B) that a person with a well-structured soul will

[25] Why, then, *should* one think that a collection of souls each of which is harmoniously structured will relate harmoniously with one another? One might plausibly suppose that the presence of turbulence and conflict within individual souls is a sure recipe for bad relations between souls, but is their absence sufficient for good relations? Here again I think Socrates' view of friendship is important. If one takes, as he does, the desire for good social relations to be fundamental to every person, then a soul which has beliefs or desires incompatible with the effecting of such relations will thereby be a conflicted soul. Hence any collection of harmoniously structured (unconflicted) souls will have no such beliefs or desires. There will then be no beliefs or desires which could stand in the way of the establishment of friendly relations. Socrates thus regards the existence of friendly relations as automatic between unconflicted souls. There is no distinct 'art of friendship' to be mastered once individual psychic harmony (which *does* require the politician's τέχνη) is achieved. A related view finds its way into the *Republic*, which downplays specific principles of social organization in favour of the thesis that if all fulfil their proper function (including, of course, the philosophers) then social cohesion will follow.

be such as to act justly, in a recognizable sense of that phrase.[26] Therefore, he is not justified in calling the well-structured soul 'just'.

This objection too, I think, fails. It is surely unobjectionable to call a person just in so far as he contributes to the justice of his society. And it is quite reasonable to conceive of the justice of a society primarily (as Socrates seems to do) in terms of its structure, rather than the acts which go on within it.[27] As John Rawls puts it in introducing the most celebrated of recent theories of justice, 'The primary subject of justice [is] the basic structure of society.'[28] One might, then, reasonably say that a just society will be a certain kind of well-structured or (to use another Rawlsian phrase) well-ordered society.[29] Now if a person may be said to be just in so far as he contributes to the justice of his society, and if a just society can reasonably be seen in terms of its structure or order, then Socrates' use of 'just' to label souls of a particular structure is legitimate. On Socrates' account—by his principle of construction—the structure of a particular soul is what determines its contribution to the structure of its society. So if it is reasonable to characterize the justice of a society in terms of its structure, then it is reasonable for Socrates to apply (or withhold) the term 'just' to a soul on the basis of that soul's structure, i.e. on the basis of its contribution to its society's structure. In principle, then, Socrates has, without reference to actions, a perfectly legitimate account of the relation between psychic harmony and the just society.[30]

[26] I do not assess here the adequacy of Socrates' argument at 506 E–507 D for this claim. For discussion see Irwin, *Gorgias*, 220–1. In my view the success of this argument would be sufficient, but not necessary, to give Socrates a reasonable theory of justice.

[27] Thus justice and temperance within individual souls is constituted by those souls having a certain structure and order (504 C–D). The result at the macro level is then characterized by Socrates in terms of a particular mathematical structure obtaining ('geometric equality': 508 A 6).

[28] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* [*Justice*] (Oxford, 1971), 3. I am not, of course, claiming that Rawls's theory is Socrates'. I am, however, using Rawls to illustrate that it is not an alien notion to conceive of justice primarily in structural terms.

[29] See Rawls, *Justice*, 4, 453 ff.

[30] This approach might go some way towards mitigating the parallel problem in *Republic* 4 (cf. n. 23 above). Given that a legitimate theory of justice may be given in structural terms, then clearly an account of the justice of the individual (soul) in terms of its structure (its psychic harmony), such as we find in book 4, provides in principle a ready framework for a structural account of a just society.

5. Theory and practice

Thus far I have presented Socrates' conception of the good life as a challenging response to Callicles' own. As theory versus theory it has the merit of being internally consistent, and defensible against various objections, without (I have suggested) ignoring the fundamental principles that drive Callicles' own theory. Indeed its strength as a response to Callicles lies precisely in this latter point. But for Socrates to set out his theory is one thing. To persuade a hostile opponent of its merits, still more to realize that theory in practice, is quite another. To these matters I now turn, and here I think Socrates is less than successful. We saw earlier that Socrates takes himself to be in the business of actually bringing about well-structured souls. He is, he says, the only true politician in Athens, in that he says what he says to his fellow citizens having regard to what is best for them (521 D 6–9).[31] He implies that this may involve bringing about their *aporia* (cf. ἀπορεῖν, 522 A 1). These clues are evidence that what Socrates has in mind here is his method of elenctic examination, which characteristically exposes his interlocutors' inconsistencies, reducing them often to bewilderment (*aporia*).

Socrates, then, in so far as he has the ability to expose inconsistency, is a diagnoser of 'split personalities'—like Callicles, for example. But diagnosis is not cure, or even treatment. It is not yet clear how such a procedure might promote a well-structured

[31] How does Socrates' claim here to be a 'true politician' square with his earlier disavowal of knowledge at 509 A 4–7? That disavowal is about the specific matter of whether it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it (though Socrates is at least strongly convinced that it *is* better), but is perhaps indicative of a wider disavowal of ethical knowledge (cf. his remark at A 4–5 that 'it is always the same story with me'). Socrates says that he 'undertakes' or 'attempts' (ἐπιχειρεῖν, 521 D 7) the political τέχνη, which need not imply that he actually possesses it (cf. Irwin, *Ethics*, 375 n. 21). However, he goes on to say that he actually practises (not merely attempts to practise) politics, alone of his contemporaries (D 7–8), and this ought to mean that he does possess the relevant τέχνη. My interpretation offers a resolution: Socrates has political τέχνη to the extent that he is a skilled practitioner of the elenchus. To this extent he can claim that he actually practises (true) politics. In the *Apology* Socrates disavows possession of first-order knowledge as ordinary craft knowledge (22 C–D), but he avows that he *does* have second-order knowledge (he is able to judge whether he and others do or do not know, and claims a certain wisdom in this regard: 21 C–22 E). This second-order knowledge, on my interpretation, is his ability critically to examine the logical relations between beliefs, and this skill, as I say, is something which Socrates does not disavow. So he might consistently claim to have a τέχνη for promoting well-structured belief (which, I argue, is the τέχνη he is claiming here) despite having issued his standard disavowal.

soul. When Socrates interrogates Gorgias, for example, the result is simply to reveal an inconsistency in the latter's position, no more. At 460 C Socrates secures Gorgias' agreement that practitioners of rhetoric will always act justly, and then points out at 460 D ff. that this conflicts with his earlier statement that they may sometimes act unjustly (cf. 457 B). At this stage (461 B) Polus intervenes, and the discussion moves on. Gorgias does not (or is not given the chance to) opt for one position rather than the other. We are not told how, or whether, he deals with his inconsistency. Here, then, is elenchus as (mere) diagnosis.

With Polus, however, it is a rather different story, suggesting a more ambitious role for the elenchus. Socrates does not just expose contradictions in Polus' beliefs, but in each of his dialectical arguments with Polus he secures Polus' rejection of one of a pair of contradictory beliefs that he exposes, and acceptance of the other, this latter corresponding in each case to a thesis that Socrates himself is propounding. A good example is Socrates' refutation of Polus' assertion that it is worse for one to be wronged than it is for one to do wrong, at 474 C–475 E. Polus agrees that it is baser (*αἴσχιον*) to do wrong than to be wronged, and that this means that it is either more painful or worse. It is evidently not more painful, so it must be worse, contrary to his original assertion. Polus concedes, not enthusiastically (he has, after all, been refuted),[32] but without objection.

Now an apparent exception in Polus' case is his reaction to the last of the conclusions that Socrates draws which lead on from the refutation (to the effect that the best thing one can do for an unjust person is denounce him and have him punished, 480 B–D), which Polus claims to find 'bizarre' (*ἄτοπα*, E 1). But he immediately concedes that given what they have previously agreed, this conclusion must follow (E 3–4).[33] So the purpose of this little piece of repartee

[32] At any rate, he takes himself to have been refuted. The validity of Socrates' argument here has been much discussed (see e.g. Irwin, *Ethics*, 100–1, with 369 n. 16 for references to earlier discussions). What matters for my purposes is that, having taken Socrates to have validly deduced his conclusion, Polus follows logical propriety in conceding it.

[33] This passage seems to me to undercut Richard McKim's claim ('Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Shame and Truth'], in C. L. Griswold (ed.), *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings* (New York, 1988), 34–48 at 46) that Polus concedes to Socrates merely because he feels a 'psychological' rather than a 'logical' force in Socrates' arguments (as reaching a conclusion he believes deep down). Polus clearly takes himself to have been logically refuted here, even while feeling (as his remark

is to show that ultimately Polus is willing to be bound by logical principles, such that he will accept what he believes to be entailed by propositions he assents to, and reject what is inconsistent with this. In this regard he will differ significantly from Callicles.[34]

Here, then, is some evidence for how Socrates might think he can, via the elenchus, promote a well-structured soul, and that is by promoting the consistency of its beliefs. Recall that every craftsman concerned with the good is, on Socrates' view, in the business of making the components of what he is working on harmonize (*ἁρμόττειν*) one with another (503 E 8); and compare this with Socrates' aversion to having inconsistent beliefs, which he likens to a musical instrument being out of tune or disharmonious (*ἀνάρμοστον*, 482 B 9). Such, he says, will be Callicles' fate if the latter cannot refute (*ἐξέλεγχειν*) philosophy and him (482 B 2 ff.). In the context—since we can hardly suppose that philosophy is meant to be refutable—there is an alternative way for Callicles to achieve harmony, which would be by having his own beliefs refuted, the ones which are inconsistent with Socrates' position, which in turn (it is being implied) Callicles could not refute. At any rate, in this passage a clear connection is being made between the operation of the elenchus, removal of inconsistency, and the promotion of a harmoniously structured soul.

Returning to Polus, we can perhaps see the operation of elenchus improving the harmonious structure of his soul in two ways. First, an inconsistency in his belief-set is in each case not only exposed but dissolved—Polus opts for one of the inconsistent pair. Second, the belief he opts for—the belief Socrates leads him to accept—has been seen by him to be entailed by other propositions which he

at E 1 indicates) a certain psychological unease at what he has conceded. Why the latter? Polus and Callicles claim that it was through shame that Gorgias and Polus respectively came to contradict themselves (461 B, 482 C–D), though Socrates himself implicitly denies this (508 B–C); and Callicles connects shame with *νόμος* and contrasts it with saying what one thinks (482 D–E). Socrates' response, I have argued, is that statements made under the heading of *νόμος* (including those by Callicles himself) are expressions of a genuine and basic human value. What McKim misses is that the same view is taken of *φύσις* statements. An interlocutor who accepts (as Polus does) an apparently anti-*φύσις* set of conclusions will clearly feel troubled.

[34] Scott ('Platonic Pessimism', 18–19) seems to me mistaken in regarding the difference between the attitudes of Polus and Callicles to Socratic procedure as being merely one of degree, not kind. Scott draws attention to Polus' protest at 480 E 1 but fails to mention his concession at E 3–4, which has no counterpart in the discussion with Callicles. Polus (unlike Callicles) is ultimately willing to be bound by the canons of reason.

assents to. Thus the beliefs he is left with have been deductively connected. In this sense they have a structure and 'harmonize' with one another, whereas the belief which he has been led to reject was not evidently supported by other beliefs and thus was not part of such a structure.

So we have seen some ways in which Socratic elenchus might promote a well-structured soul in an interlocutor. But we have also noted that there are two views of the elenchus on offer, the one which has it as merely diagnostic and productive of *aporia*, and the other which more ambitiously has it dissolving contradictions, even establishing a positive and consistent thesis. Each version has, with Gorgias and Polus respectively, scored a point. It seems fair to assume that the critical contest for the determination of the dialogue's final position on the role of the elenchus will be the one featuring Socrates' third interlocutor—Callicles.

6. Love and logic

In scholarly discussions of the elenchus, it has sometimes been suggested, most notably by Vlastos,[35] that an interlocutor is never logically compelled to opt for one of the inconsistent pair of beliefs which Socrates exposes over the other. One may spell this out in the following way: the interlocutor may choose the supported belief (taking as our exemplar here the case of Polus discussed above); he may choose the unsupported belief; or he may suspend judgement altogether. Even though it is only in the former case that one comes to have a well-structured set of beliefs, it is arguable that in all these cases there is some progress being made towards the possession of a well-structured soul, at least in so far as in none of these cases is one continuing to hold inconsistent beliefs. These are all, it might be argued, options which respect logical propriety.[36]

Logic, however, only takes us so far. From a psychological point of view, it is quite possible for an interlocutor to have reasons (in a suitably wide sense) to continue holding contradictory beliefs even post-elenchus. Say, for example, an interlocutor is committed to

[35] See esp. Gregory Vlastos, 'The Socratic Elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 27–58 at 30, 48 ff.

[36] However, I shall argue below that the interlocutor's logically permissible range of options is in fact narrower.

belief *A* (without necessarily having *deduced A* from anything). To be shown that he has other beliefs which entail *B*, the contradictory of *A*, need not be sufficient to eradicate his commitment to *A*. Yet he may realize that *B* follows from other beliefs which he is prepared to assent to, and thus feel a commitment to *B* as well. Or he may indeed be committed to *B* on other grounds, without having deduced *B* from other beliefs of his. My point is that it is clearly not psychologically impossible for a person to have a commitment to contradictory beliefs. It is not psychologically inevitable in such a situation that, even when one is made aware of one's contradictory position, one will reject one of the pair or suspend judgement. Indeed, one could hold that such a commitment to contradictory beliefs was not possible only if one made a further psychological claim—namely that a person's overriding commitment was necessarily to logical principles (such as, for example, $\neg[p\&\neg p]$).

Now it is evidently the view of Socrates himself in the *Gorgias* that a commitment to contradictory beliefs *is* possible—otherwise he could hardly have represented it as a real danger for Callicles that if he fails to refute Socrates' position, then he might disagree with himself 'in the whole of his life' (*ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ βίῳ*, 482 B 6). The specific matter at issue here is Socrates' thesis that to do wrong with impunity is the worst of evils for the wrongdoer (B 3–4), which he had argued for against Polus (cf. 479 D). So the implication is that if Callicles cannot refute Socrates, then having heard (as he has) Socrates' reasoning with Polus, he will have a commitment to Socrates' belief, as well as to the contradictory belief that he already holds. That is, he will, in full self-awareness, hold contradictory beliefs, and continue to do so ('in the whole of his life'). I shall shortly be suggesting that the reason why Socrates thinks that such a position is possible is that he takes on board in this section of the *Gorgias* a complex psychology which recognizes that the positions we hold are not necessarily governed by adherence to logical rules.

Callicles' fate, at any rate, certainly seems to be the one that Socrates predicts, if not in the whole of his life, then at least for the duration of the dialogue. He remains unreconstructed, in so far as he never clearly gives up any of the positions which cause him conflict.[37] When Socrates concludes at 505 B 11–12 that it is better for one's soul to be restrained than unrestrained, which strikes at

[37] Perhaps the nearest thing to a 'clean' dialectical success with Callicles that Socrates effects is at 499 B, where Callicles concedes that some pleasures are better

the very heart of the position outlined by Callicles 1, Callicles' response is not to concede that this is so, but to refuse to discuss the matter with Socrates any more (C 1–2). This is the action of a man who is unable to challenge the steps by which Socrates reached this conclusion; so reasoning does tell him that the conclusion is correct. Yet he is unwilling (or unable) to throw off his commitment to one central element of his original position, which contradicts Socrates' conclusion. His silence speaks eloquently for his dilemma, without which he would be free to concede to Socrates with relative grace, in the manner of Polus.[38]

Furthermore, we have already seen how Socrates, earlier on, used the value system of Callicles 2—his sense of convention—to make Callicles uncomfortable with the kind of position represented by Callicles 1, and hence to expose the conflicts that are inherent in Callicles' overall picture of the good life. Callicles never goes so far as to withdraw his commitment to the life of unrestraint, the life which is possible only for one who can smash convention. Yet running alongside this he never ceases to advocate ingratiating oneself with the Athenian δῆμος, trimming oneself to *their* whims, even while, as his remark at 521 B 2 makes clear, he acknowledges that this is flattery, and so is repugnant to the sensibilities of Callicles 1.

Callicles' conflicts, however, flow, I have suggested, from a fundamentally plausible conception of what the elements of a good human life might be, a conception which Socrates himself, at a basic level, shares. And this in turn makes it quite understandable why Callicles should hold to his principles, taken each individually. It is only when considered in relation to one another that they are problematic. And this relation is a *logical* relation—the principles conflict, or contradict. Logic, therefore, provides the only warning sign that, taken as a whole, there is something amiss with Callicles' conception of the good life, as worked out in this way. But this then means that the only way Callicles will do something about his situation is if his commitment to logical rules overrides

than others. But ultimately (as we shall see) this does not lead him to concede that the life of unrestrained satisfaction of appetite is not the best life.

[38] McKim ('Shame and Truth', 43) rather gives the game away in claiming that Socrates has made Callicles agree with himself, and then, with regard to Callicles' withdrawal from discussion, that Callicles 'tries to disassociate [*sic*] himself' from Socrates' conclusions but that 'despite himself' he actually believes them. The point is that Callicles *does* dissociate himself by his withdrawal, and that to believe a conclusion 'despite oneself' is not to agree with oneself at all.

his commitment to his individual beliefs. If not, he will choose (as I argue he does) to remain committed to the individual beliefs. So he will be left in a position where, whatever he does, he will in fact not be able to act with integrity. To the extent that he pursues one principle, he will be breaching the other. To the extent that he conforms, he will be opposing Callicles 1; to the extent that he kicks over the traces, he will be opposing Callicles 2.[39] Socrates, by contrast, can act with integrity, since he has worked out his principles in such a way that they do not conflict with one another. Having a harmoniously structured soul, then, turns out to be necessary quite generally for living a life of integrity—assuming, that is, that one has principles at all. So Callicles' life, from this perspective, lacks integrity simply because his principles conflict. This aspect is independent of the specific content of those principles. And the principles spell a lack of integrity just in so far as they are attached to the same person—being both Callicles 1 and Callicles 2 hurts because these are aspects of a single individual. So we see from the

[39] As Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith rightly point out in *Plato's Socrates* (Oxford, 1994), in the context of the *Gorgias*, 'people do not always act in accordance with all of their convictions. Indeed, there may be no way for them to do so, for their convictions may be in discord' (79). It is disappointing, though, that in seeking to answer the question raised by Socrates' remarks at 482 B–C, namely 'what harm Socrates thought there was in having inconsistent . . . beliefs' (78–9), the authors' main reply seems to be that 'what the interlocutor *really* believes turns out to be the opposite of what the interlocutor originally introduced into the argument' (79, their emphasis), where what is originally introduced is something the interlocutor turns out not 'really' to believe is beneficial, and the contradictory position is what the interlocutor 'really' believes is beneficial. (A related view of the elenchus in the *Gorgias* is Kahn, 'Drama and Dialectic', 114–15: its function is to help draw out what one 'truly desires'.) The problem with this (type of) account is that it seems to explain at most what is wrong with having the original belief, not distinctively what is wrong with having inconsistent beliefs: indeed, if Socrates thought that the elenchus simply brought to the forefront what we 'really' believe as opposed to what we do not 'really' believe—and hence, presumably, what we do *not* believe—it would be hard to see why inconsistency should ever have been an issue for him. I am hardly inconsistent if I ('really') believe *p* and (do not 'really') believe not-*p*. While sometimes (e.g. 466 E 3–7) claiming that an interlocutor who maintains *p* holds not-*p* in so far as that interlocutor has beliefs which entail not-*p*, Socrates does not deny that the interlocutor does also hold *p* in such circumstances. Similarly, assuming we take Socrates to be in earnest (denied by Kevin McTighe, 'Socrates on Desire for the Good and the Involuntariness of Wrongdoing: *Gorgias* 466 A–468 E', in H. H. Benson (ed.), *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates* (Oxford, 1992), 263–97; but I cannot enter that controversy here) in distinguishing between what one wants or desires (*βούλεσθαι*) as one's (actual) good and what (merely) seems good to one (466 A–468 E), this hardly implies that he holds that an agent is not genuinely conflicted in (say) wanting *p* but thinking not-*p* good.

case of Callicles how logic has the potential to play a significant ethical and 'personal' role.[40]

However, Socrates fails to rid Callicles of his conflicts, and there are some conclusions to be drawn from this failure. One lesson brought home by his exchanges with Callicles is that there may be more to holding a belief than seeing that a conclusion follows from premisses one accepts as true. And there may be more to rejecting a belief than seeing that it is inconsistent with such a conclusion. That is, there may be more (in practice) involved in determining the beliefs one holds than matters of logical principle, and therefore more involved in belief than the elenchus is equipped to deal with. Other psychological factors are in play. Recall in particular how Socrates attributes both the consistency of his beliefs and the inconsistency of those of Callicles to *love* (ἔρως) at 481 D–482 B. Callicles' love for his whimsical beloveds overrides any commitment he has to logical consistency, whereas Socrates' first love is for such consistency. In neither case is logical principle seen automatically to govern one's beliefs. Even in Socrates' case it is the way his love is directed that determines that logical principle governs his beliefs. And with Callicles it is the way *his* love is directed that ensures that in his case it does not. So too, when Callicles says he is unpersuaded by Socrates at 513 C, despite being unable to challenge his argument, the latter puts this down to Callicles' love of the δῆμος.[41]

Belief in the *Gorgias* has become a more complex psychological item in the section with Callicles than it was earlier. With Polus, as we saw, it was taken for granted that one accepted a conclusion which was entailed by premisses one assented to. In the section with Callicles this is no longer so. Factors such as the way one's love is directed have to be taken into account. From this vantage-point it is possible to assess how the elenchus stands up to a more ambitious role than the mere exposure of contradiction, as in the case of Gorgias. With respect to Callicles it fails in two related ways at this

[40] In the terminology of the *Republic*, it might make Callicles a unity, not a plurality (cf. 4, 443 D–E, on the unity of the harmonious soul, esp. ἕνα γενόμενον ἐκ πολλῶν, E 1)—more loosely, one Callicles, not two. As Socrates puts it in the *Gorgias*, it is worse than being contradicted by others for a person, being one (ἕνα ὄντα, 482 C 2), to contradict himself—so to be one but not a unity.

[41] E. R. Dodds (*Plato, Gorgias* (Oxford, 1959) 352 ad 513 C 5) does not tell the full story in speaking here of 'Plato's recognition that basic moral attitudes are determined by psychological, not logical reasons'. The view of the text is that the interrelations between one's beliefs (including moral beliefs) *can* be governed by logic, but that one's attitude to logic is itself determined non-logically.

level. First, it fails as a vehicle for the *advocacy* of Socrates' position, having apparently succeeded so well just in this regard with Polus. However, Polus' response, whether or not it was logically compelled (as Vlastos denies), was certainly logically *permissible*. Now to show on *logical* grounds that the elenchus is an inadequate vehicle for advocacy, one would need to show an interlocutor taking a logically permissible option other than conceding the Socratic thesis. Callicles' response, however, retaining a commitment to contradictory beliefs, is logically *im*permissible. This means that there is no evidence here that the dialogue is questioning the adequacy of the elenchus on logical grounds. In a sense the elenchus comes full circle here. With Callicles it does no more than reveal his inconsistencies, as it did with Gorgias. But with Callicles there is clearly an intention to do more, to persuade him that the Socratic thesis, rather than his own, be adopted. Socrates' failure to do this is explained not on the basis that Callicles took some logically permissible option consistent with withholding assent from the Socratic thesis, which would have shown that the elenchus was inadequate for advocacy on logical grounds; rather, the explanation rests on a richer conception of the psychology of belief, which recognizes that what we believe may be governed by more than adherence to logical rules. The elenchus fails in this regard on psychological grounds.

This brings us to the second, related way in which the elenchus fails with Callicles. It not only fails as a vehicle for advocating Socrates' theory of the good life. It fails too as a vehicle for *realizing* that theory in practice. Socrates claims, as we have seen, that the elenchus can bring about well-structured souls, and once again Polus has provided evidence in his favour. Indeed, these two aspects of the elenchus (advocacy of the thesis and promotion of a well-structured soul) cohere perfectly. Socrates will only advocate a thesis via the elenchus on the basis that it is derived deductively from other propositions. So where his advocacy succeeds on this basis, and an interlocutor is led to accept Socrates' thesis and reject the contradictory (without this latter, one cannot speak of a wholly successful piece of advocacy), that interlocutor is thereby led to a well-structured set of beliefs. But for exposure of contradictions to lead, even minimally, to their dissolution, it is necessary that the interlocutor have a prior commitment to having his beliefs bound by logical rules. So bringing about this commitment in an interlocutor is a prior condition of the elenchus succeeding. But the elenchus

itself only deals in logical relations. It can make no progress with an interlocutor who does not already have an overriding psychological commitment to logical propriety. And so Callicles' conflicts fail to be dissolved.

The dialogue's portrayal, via the figure of Callicles, of the psychological inadequacy of the elenchus is of course all of a piece with the general direction that it takes in its final section, towards a more complex psychology. At 493 A 3–4 Socrates speaks of the part[42] of the soul in which our appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι), such as hunger and thirst, are lodged. Indeed, Socrates frequently characterizes the Calliclean soul as disorderly with respect to its unruly appetites (e.g. 505 B, 507 E), notwithstanding the fact that Callicles' psychic disharmony is also described in terms of his disharmonious beliefs. But Socrates himself, it is worth noting, seems not to give up on the elenchus. At 513 C 8–D 1 he is still telling Callicles that if they examine (διασκοπεῖσθαι) matters better, then Callicles will be persuaded.[43] This language is not explicitly advocating further elenctic examination, but is certainly suggestive of it. Yet just a line earlier Socrates has been telling Callicles that the latter remains unpersuaded, not because the *arguments* haven't been good enough, but because of the love (ἔρως) of the δῆμος that is within him; this implies that, to some extent, love is a force which the elenchus is ill-

[42] Socrates speaks literally of 'this [τοῦτο] of the soul in which [ἐν ᾧ] the appetites are'. But given the locative terminology there seems no reason not to translate τοῦτο as 'this part'.

[43] Jyl Gentzler ('The Sophistic Cross-examination of Callicles', *Ancient Philosophy*, 15 (1995), 17–43, esp. 41–2) claims that Socrates deliberately uses sophistic methods in his discussion with Callicles, so that the talk here of better examination in the future looks forward to a time when he will not employ such tactics. Gentzler's thesis rests on interpreting Callicles as thinking initially that Socrates is 'incapable' (41, 42) of using sophistic methods, and as believing that this is why Socrates advocates a form of life which does not require them, not because he really believes it is the best life. Socrates then responds by showing in his debate with Callicles that he can use sophistic methods. But Callicles simply does not say, or imply, that Socrates is incapable on a technical level of living a life which would require the employment of sophistic methods. Gentzler cites (41) 484 E 4–485 A 3; but these lines, as the context makes clear, imply only that in Callicles' view Socrates is indeed more adept at philosophy than anything else, not incapable of turning his hand to other things. Callicles thinks that Socrates is naturally talented (cf. εὐφυής, 484 C 8, 485 D 4, 486 B 5; φύσιν . . . γενναίαν, 485 E 7), perfectly capable of excelling in the life that Callicles advocates. He is being corrupted by philosophy (cf. 485 E 7–486 A 1), but not irretrievably so—otherwise Callicles would hardly exhort Socrates to give up philosophy now and adopt his preferred alternative, as he does at 486 C–D. If Socrates were to give a demonstration of sophistry as a way of showing a sceptical Callicles that he had what it took, he would be preaching to the converted.

equipped to deal with. If Socrates is then suggesting that elenctic examination on its own can (eventually) overcome Callicles' love, this sits uneasily with Socrates' claim at 481 D ff. that it is love which determines Socrates' own attitude to argument, not argument that determines his love. Socrates' apparent reaffirmation of elenchus is at this point an act of faith: in the light of the psychological developments in the *Gorgias*, elenchus, as a vehicle for change, is in crisis.

The psychological complexity of the *Gorgias* has some affinity with that developed in *Republic* book 4 (436 A ff.), most obviously in the identification of a part of the soul with appetites. Now the *Gorgias* leaves open the question of the relation between appetites and beliefs. But it is striking that in *Republic* book 4 Socrates speaks of a harmonious soul in terms of its three parts, including appetite, 'having the same belief' (ὁμοδοξῶσι, 442 D 1) that reason should rule. In the *Gorgias* itself, Socrates has spoken of psychic (dis)harmony in terms of (dis)harmonious belief, as we have seen. So whatever the status of appetite, and its relation to belief, it is clear that (dis)harmony of belief is a central element in psychic (dis)harmony. But the *Gorgias* has recognized that the beliefs we hold may fail to be governed by adherence to logical rules. So where logical contradiction arises in an interlocutor's position, the very fact of displaying the contradiction to the interlocutor may not be sufficient to remove the interlocutor's adherence to any one of the contradictory beliefs at stake. Hence the inadequacy of the elenchus, whose efficacy depends upon the interlocutor's beliefs being governed by adherence to logical rules.

Now the elenchus relies on such obedience as a given. But Socrates' own remarks on love suggest that this is a mistake. For, as we have seen, he attributes both his and Callicles' very different attitudes towards consistency to their being in love and to their love being directed each in a different way.[44] So Callicles, to come

[44] It is crucial to recognize that Socrates' attitude is as much grounded on love as Callicles'. Scott ('Platonic Pessimism', 21 n. 11) seems to regard the role of ἔρως in the *Gorgias* as purely negative, since he mentions Socrates' attribution of Callicles' intransigence to ἔρως at 513 C, but not his similar attribution of his own consistency (as well as Callicles' inconsistency) at 481 D–482 A. Scott's one-sided reading of the role of ἔρως in the *Gorgias* is then echoed in his interpretation of the *Republic*, which focuses chiefly on showing how the ἔρως or desire of the non-rational parts of the tripartite soul may cause the rational part to take on intransigent false beliefs. But this gives a misleading picture of the role of ἔρως for two connected reasons: first, ἔρως is (as we shall see) given an explicitly positive role in the educational programme of

to have Socrates' attitude, will need to redirect his love.[45] And the way one directs one's love is not something that is seen here to be determinable by appeal to logical principle. Rather, it is the way one directs one's love which determines whether or not one will adhere to logical principles. Once it is recognized that factors such as where one's love is directed may govern the structure of one's beliefs, then to achieve psychic harmony even at the level of belief (that is, logical consistency) will require the employment of methods that appeal to more than, or other than, logical principles. One needs to be a *lover* of consistency, and of consistency above all, if one is to reject inconsistency when the elenchus exposes it. Though the elenchus can expose inconsistency, it cannot make one a lover of consistency.

7. Elenchus and dialectic

The *Gorgias*, then, presents us with a complex psychology (in particular, the existence of love as a powerful independent force) against the background of an ethical theory of psychic harmony (in particular, consistency of belief). The problem it leaves us with is that of finding a method of bringing about psychic harmony, given the complex psychology. The elenchus is unable by itself to keep pace, since it can do no more than take it for granted that our beliefs are governed by adherence to logical principles. And this is a dangerous assumption, as the case of Callicles shows. So I would now like to argue that the *Republic* will offer a solution to this problem of disharmonious belief in the *Gorgias*, by introducing (in books 2–3) a theory of education designed to direct a student's love towards

Republic 2–3; second, it is treated there as a psychic force independent of the tripartite division of book 4. The correct reading of the role of ἔρως in both dialogues seems to me to be this: in itself it is value-neutral (cf. *Symp.* 202 B: ἔρως is neither fair nor foul, neither good nor bad, but something in between), though it can take on value derivatively (see n. 50 below); but it determines our values in that what we value is just what our ἔρως is directed towards.

[45] A good appreciation of the point that Callicles needs to redirect (not eliminate) his love is to be found in Dan Avnon ('"Know Thyself": Socratic Companionship and Platonic Community', *Political Theory*, 23 (1995), 304–29 at 315–17), though Avnon sees such a process as amenable to Socratic method, rather than (as I do) creating a crisis for it. Avnon is working with a particular interpretation of Socratic method (308–10), such that it contains a strong non-discursive element; though I find his interpretation rather underdeveloped, I cannot discuss it further here.

consistency.[46] I shall then argue (against Vlastos) that the elenchus is not a logically flawed vehicle for advocating or realizing the ideal of psychic harmony as well-structured belief, so that once its psychological limitations have been supplemented it remains perfectly viable.

It is noticeable that in the *Republic*, after book 1 and the debate with Thrasymachus, Socrates no longer goes around attempting to expose people's contradictions. To this extent the elenchus takes a back seat. It is surely no accident that the closest counterpart of Thrasymachus, Socrates' main interlocutor in book 1, is Callicles, in both thought and temperament.[47] The debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus ends with Thrasymachus neither conceding Socrates' position nor refuting it argumentatively (cf. 354 A 10–11)—a reminder and reiteration of the limitations of the elenchus which we saw in the *Gorgias*. Now book 1, in which the elenchus is practised, refers to psychic dissension essentially in terms of conflicting beliefs (cf. *οὐχ ὁμοοοῦντα αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ*, 352 A 7). Then in

[46] The psychological complexity of the *Gorgias* seems underestimated by Irwin, *Gorgias*, 216 ad 504 D–E. He says that 'there [in the *Republic*] Plato . . . does not suppose that his [the ruler's] methods will be purely cognitive', whereas 'the education described in *Republic* ii–iii has no place in the *Gorgias*'. By this Irwin seems to mean that this education has no *relevance* for the *Gorgias*'s outlook (since it is trivially true that the education is not as a matter of fact *in* the *Gorgias*). In fact such education has every relevance for the *Gorgias*, and is probably, I shall argue, motivated by it. The attack on music at *Gorg.* 501 D–502 A is cited by Irwin (loc. cit.) to support his view, but this passage is not an attack on music in general, but on certain kinds and the way they are used, a position perfectly consistent with that of the *Republic*. In a later paper ('Coercion and Objectivity in Plato's Dialectic', *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 40 (1988), 49–74) Irwin presents a picture of development, with respect to Socratic method, between earlier dialogues (on the one hand) and the *Gorgias* and *Republic* (on the other), when he claims that in the latter cases 'Socratic method loses its attachment to particular people, and becomes a method for argument to conclusions that are justifiably claimed to be true independently of anyone's beliefs' (73). Thus when Callicles refuses to co-operate with Socrates 'nothing is lost . . . [s]ince Socrates' aim was to argue for the truth of his position . . . not to persuade Callicles' (70). This seems to me to get things, developmentally speaking, exactly the wrong way round. The *Gorgias* combines an enhanced interest in politics with the notion that a principal way of achieving political good is bringing about psychic harmony—harmony in individual souls—which importantly includes consistency of belief. From this perspective it is hollow for Socrates to argue (however soundly) without affecting an interlocutor's beliefs. The political task is a personal one. Thus (to labour a point) it is Callicles' inconsistency—the inconsistency of an individual (soul)—that Socrates highlights for concern, which is hardly the procedure of one who is satisfied merely to establish truth 'independently of anyone's beliefs'.

[47] I do not claim that Thrasymachus' views are the same as those of Callicles. For discussion see e.g. T. D. J. Chappell, 'The Virtues of Thrasymachus', *Phronesis*, 38 (1993), 1–17.

books 2–3 μουσική (music, literature, and other arts) and gymnastics are recommended as the proper education for psychic harmony, and both are to be used for educating the philosophic, not just the spirited, part of the soul (3, 411 E 4–412 A 2).[48] An appetitive part is not in fact mentioned until book 4 (though it is perhaps foreshadowed at 3, 389 E 1–2), and this suggests, in view of love's leading role in books 2–3 (to which I shall presently turn), that, as in the *Gorgias*, love is being treated here as a distinct, and perhaps the most basic, psychic force.

In summarizing the aims of the educational programme of books 2–3, Socrates says in *Republic* book 3 that the well-educated philosophic element of the soul will be orderly (κόσμιον, 410 E 3), and so it seems reasonable to assume that such a soul will be educated to be disposed to having consistent beliefs. Specifically, Socrates emphasizes that this disposition will be based on love. For one purpose of the educational process set out here is to prepare the young guardian, when old enough to acquire it, to welcome reason (λόγος) as a 'nearest and dearest' (ἀσπάζοιτ' ἂν αὐτὸν γνωρίζων δι' οἰκειότητα, 402 A 3–4). The idea seems to be that, thanks to one's training in μουσική in particular, and the general appreciation of beauty and harmony which this will inspire (401 D–E), one will feel a quasi-familial love for the principles of rational discourse when one is old enough to grasp them for the first time.[49] In similar vein, the object (τέλος, cf. 403 C 4–7) of education in μουσική is to promote the right kind of love (ὁ . . . ὀρθὸς ἔρως, 403 A 7),[50] which is love of one who is orderly and fine (κοσμίου τε καὶ καλοῦ . . .

[48] Gymnastics is said to be intended primarily for the spirited part (410 B), so by implication μουσική may be intended primarily for the philosophic part. However, an education consisting exclusively of gymnastics will produce an over-tough spirited part, and of just μουσική an over-soft philosophic part (410 D–411 B). So in the end each discipline needs the other for an optimal result. Clear on the point is 4, 441 E 8–442 A 2—it is the *mixture* (κρᾶσις) of the two which will modulate satisfactorily both the philosophic and the spirited part.

[49] Gill (*Personality*, 271) takes the language of 2, 402 B–C to be narrowing the sense of 'acquiring reason' at 402 A 2 to the recognition of 'forms' and their 'images' in a metaphysically loaded way; but this reading, even if correct (the language need not be taken as commital, nor is it clear that a back reference to 402 A 2 is intended), should be placed in a broader context: such recognition is the upshot of rational enquiry in an elenctic format (cf. 7, 534 B–D), and it is the ability to engage in such enquiry that marks the possession of λόγος (534 D 3–10).

[50] Hence although ἔρως is in itself value-neutral (see n. 44 above), it may derivatively become the object of a value-judgement depending on whether the judger considers its object to be good or bad. Thus sometimes the term is pejorative: ἔρως is labelled a 'tyrant' at *Rep.* 9, 573 D 4; but this is no more than a case of value-neutral

ἐρᾶν, A 7–8),[51] in particular that person's psychic qualities (402 D 10–E 1). In these respects books 2–3 seem designedly well adapted to meeting the *Gorgias*'s challenge of promoting a love of consistency, especially (given the emphasis on reason) consistency of belief, by methods that do not themselves appeal to logical principles.[52]

The suggestion I am making here, that books 2–3 of the *Republic* look back to the *Gorgias* at least as much as forward to *Republic* book 4,[53] helps to explain the curiosity of the order of books 2–4. One would expect psychological complexity to be argued for first, and only then a theory of education designed to accommodate it to be introduced. In the *Republic* it is the other way round. No psychological complexity is mentioned explicitly in book 1. But an educational theory whose specific purpose is to bring harmony to complex souls (as is confirmed at 4, 441 E 8–442 A 2; cf. 3, 410 E 8–412 A 1) crops up in books 2–3. An argument for psychological complexity has to wait until book 4. Why this strange order?[54] One

ἔρως becoming value-laden in virtue of its particular attachment, here its dwelling in the appetitive part of the soul (cf. 4, 439 D 1–6).

[51] Or perhaps 'that which is orderly and fine' (neuter rather than masculine). But the previous lines (402 D–E) have been discussing the right kind of *person* to love.

[52] Although its focus is somewhat different, the *Symposium* too reflects a preoccupation with the role of one's non-rational drives, specifically, of course, love, in the training *of the intellect*. The one who has completed the ascent prescribed there by Diotima has been educated in matters of love (cf. πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ παιδαγωγηθῇ, 210 E 2–3); from the context (e.g. 210 A 4–5, 211 B 5–C 2) the sense here is evidently 'educated *how* to love (in the right way)', not merely 'about love'. The result of this training of one's love is that one pursues and attains knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, 210 D 7).

[53] To *Republic* 5 as well. Here, of course, the difference between those who have knowledge and those who have mere belief is characterized as a difference between lovers of two kinds of object—lovers of wisdom (philosophers) on the one hand, lovers of spectacle on the other (e.g. 475 B–E). Richard Kraut ('The Defense of Justice in Plato's *Republic*', in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* [*Cambridge Companion*] (Cambridge, 1992), 311–37 at 334 n. 19) emphasizes the many occasions in books 5 and 6 where Forms are described as objects of love. In book 9 the parts of the tripartite soul are themselves characterized each by love (φιλία) of particular objects (580 D–581 C), which suggests (given that everyone has a tripartite soul; I ignore here the complications of 10, 611 B–612 A) that everyone has a certain level of love for the range of the soul's objects, but that one or other part predominates according to where the love is strongest (cf. 581 B 12–C 1; 6, 485 D).

[54] Gill (*Personality*, 268) seems to see rather an opposite kind of oddity in the *Republic*'s ordering when he remarks that, in view of the fact that the characterization of justice as psychic harmony comes *between* the two stages of the *Republic*'s educational programme, one might infer that 'the first stage of education is all that is required to provide the virtues and the correlated psychic harmony'. But the oddity surely runs the other way. What is prima facie strange is to have this education for

answer, it seems to me, is that a specific psychological complexity, namely the existence of love as an independent force, is assumed to be the case in books 2–3 independently of the arguments for a tripartite soul in book 4 (in which love plays no particular role). The position arrived at in the *Gorgias*, I suggest, of which Socrates' encounter with Thrasymachus is a reminder, already carries sufficient weight to motivate a theory of education whose *raison d'être* is avowedly psychological complexity. That is the message conveyed by the ordering of books 1–4. The juxtaposition of book 1 with books 2–3, in which the elenchus is dropped and psychological complexity introduced, serves to suggest that, independently of the content of book 4, the method advocated in books 2–3 can be read as a response to the inadequacies of the elenchus once psychological complexity, of the relevant kind, is recognized.[55]

psychic harmony set out before, rather than after, any argument for psychological complexity.

[55] A discussion of why elenchus disappears after book 1 may be found in C. D. C. Reeve (*Philosopher-kings* (Princeton, 1988), 3–24), who offers various suggestions, but does not mention the problems posed by psychological complexity. Julia Annas (*An Introduction to Plato's* Republic (Oxford, 1981), 56) attributes Socrates' failure to convince Thrasymachus to the fact that certain positions may have an 'emotional force' not susceptible to the 'purely intellectual approach of arguments like those of Socrates'. But she does not connect this observation with the character of the education system introduced in the immediately following books 2–3. Dominic Scott ('Platonic Pessimism', 26) rightly sees the problem Plato is confronted with at the end of book 1 as being the failure of interlocutors to 'have the right disposition towards rational argument', a problem to be tackled by the *Republic*'s programme of moral education, though Scott does not focus on the question of how exactly this is done. Christopher Gill, on the other hand ('Plato and the Education of Character', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 67 (1985), 1–26), discusses the theory of books 2–3 at some length, but without connecting its approach to the difficulties raised for the elenchus by psychological complexity. In his later discussion of the educational programme of *Republic* 2–3 (*Personality*, 266–75) Gill seems to me both to under- and overestimate the role played by the rational part of the soul: underestimate, in that he sees the programme as being 'directed primarily at the spirited part of the psyche' (269); overestimate, in that, to the extent that the rational part is in play, Gill sees it as being implanted with 'action-guiding *beliefs*' (268, emphasis added), whereas what the text emphasizes is the acquisition of a certain attitude—namely love of order and harmony—whose purpose is to foster a commitment to rational principles when the student later encounters them. Note that 2, 377 B speaks of *bad* early education as giving children undesirable beliefs; and even here the main concern is over what beliefs they will hold when *grown up* (τελεωθῶσιν, B 8); there is no implication that *good* early education is to be an 'equal and opposite' process of belief-implantation in the young. Even in a context discussing the importance of the Guardians not losing their right beliefs, at 3, 412 E ff., the back reference to their early education at 413 E still speaks simply of the good rhythm and harmony acquired from μουσική. Compare the 'dye' analogy of 4, 429 D–430 A, where the

Where does this leave the elenchus? Even taking these psychological developments on board, we have still seen no evidence from the dialogues that Socratic elenchus is coming under criticism as a *logically* flawed method for establishing a position and bringing about psychic harmony. That is because, I suggest, the elenchus is *not* logically flawed in this way. Thus Kraut has argued[56] (reasonably, it seems to me), against Vlastos, that Socrates is quite entitled to suppose that he has proved a proposition p, by deducing it from premisses q and r, so long as q and r are accepted as true. On pain of vicious regress, one cannot make it a necessary condition of proof that premisses be deduced as well as conclusion. What this means is that on logical grounds Socrates is entitled to expect the assent of the interlocutor to p in these circumstances. Any interlocutor guided by an appreciation of the (logical) notion of proof will assent to the truth of p if he takes p to have been validly deduced from propositions he assents to (this is what Polus realized at 480 E 4). Combine this with a proper appreciation of the law of

early education features as providing not the dye (the right sorts of beliefs) but the preparation which will ensure that the dye holds fast when it is taken on. In 'Socrates and the Early Dialogues', *Cambridge Companion*, 121–69 at 126, Terry Penner remarks intriguingly that by the time of the *Republic* the education of books 2–3 is necessary 'before Socratic dialogue can do the slightest good', but by this he appears simply to mean that other factors than the intellectual are now involved in the bringing about of virtue, since he goes on to say that now 'the training of the emotional and the irrational *more or less independently of the intellectual* is a necessary pre-condition of virtue' (127, emphasis added). My point is that the training here, though non-rational in content, is to a significant degree targeted *at* the intellectual part of the soul.

[56] See Richard Kraut, 'Comments on Gregory Vlastos, "The Socratic Elenchus"', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 59–70 at 61–2. In the same paper (69) Kraut draws attention to a potentially troubling passage at the end of the *Gorgias* where Socrates apparently charges himself, as well as Callicles, with inconsistency: 'we [Callicles and I] never think the same things about the same matters' (527 D 7), and (not mentioned by Kraut) this is a 'disgrace' (D 5). In fact the line is ambiguous—Socrates might be lamenting the fact that he and Callicles remain at loggerheads. Indeed the former reading would contradict Socrates' perhaps playful agreement at 490 E 9–11 that he *does* always say the same things about the same things. However, even on the assumption that Socrates is charging himself with inconsistency (though with little evidence from the preceding pages), one must distinguish the normative from the factual here. At 482 A 7–B 1 Socrates claimed that philosophy always said the same things, and that he was in love with philosophy. This implies that he will (unlike Callicles) strive for consistency, make it his first priority, not that he necessarily has completely attained it. It is curious that Kraut infers from 527 D that we should not overestimate the importance of consistency for Socrates (70). From an admission that a person sometimes is inconsistent one can infer nothing about how much that person might value consistency, especially given the difficulty of attaining it.

non-contradiction, and the interlocutor ought, on logical grounds, to reject not-*p* too. We should, then, accept that the elenchus is not a logically flawed vehicle for proving propositions. On purely logical grounds, an interlocutor should assent to the theses which Socrates attempts to establish by elenctic method, just so long as the conditions outlined above hold good.[57] What elenchus cannot do, however, is train people to adhere steadfastly to logical principles. Once this has been achieved, once (one might say) one has been prepared to follow the argument wherever it leads, then elenctic method is perfectly viable.

That is why, transmuted into dialectic (or part of dialectic), Socratic question-and-answer can survive into the *Phaedo* (see 75 D, 78 D), and *Republic* books 6–7, to represent the method that philosophers use. The difference is that now this method is restricted to those who, by nature and training, love above all the canons of reason.[58] This is reflected in a conscious concern that the attitude of the interlocutors towards reasoning is right. In the *Phaedo*, those who use dialectic are clearly to some degree members of a Socratic circle. Even here, Socrates has to exhort his interlocutors, in the face of potentially unpalatable conclusions, not to become *haters* of argument (*μισόλογοι*, 89 D ff.).[59] In the *Republic*, dialectical question-and-answer reappears as part of the curriculum for trainee philosopher-kings (7, 537 D ff.). The potential philosopher

[57] It is of course always open to a third party to challenge an agreed premiss. Indeed, this idea is crucial to the progress of the *Gorgias*: an assumption agreed with Gorgias is challenged by Polus; and one agreed by Polus is challenged by Callicles. But proof must end somewhere, and no one pops up from the audience to challenge anything conceded by Callicles. The dependence of proof on unproven assumptions perhaps explains, first, the odd mix of Socrates' confidence in his conclusions with disavowal that he knows them (508 E–509 A) and, second, the *Republic*'s (albeit obscure) drive towards 'destroying the hypotheses and moving towards the [unhypothesized] principle' (7, 533 C 8) as the means of achieving the highest cognitive state.

[58] Kahn, 'Drama and Dialectic', 119, while rightly emphasizing the role of *ἔρως* in the middle dialogues (though rather overlooking its explicit presence in the *Gorgias*: this aspect earns a passing mention in *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1996), 145 n. 24), presents what seems to me a false dichotomy in claiming that in those dialogues 'the desire for the good and the search for truth are presented not in terms of elenchus and self-examination but in access to the Forms conceived as the erotic pursuit of wisdom and reality'. But the pursuit remains importantly grounded on Socratic question-and-answer, and it is the principles which underlie this procedure that we must fall in love with.

[59] Note how the term *μισόλογος* recurs at *Rep.* 3, 411 D 7, used to describe one whose education is lacking in *μουσική*.

will already have a nature 'akin to argument' (cf. *τὸ εὖ πεφυκέναι καὶ τὸ συγγενὲς τῶν λόγων*, 6, 494 D 9–E 1). But still the young are criticized for misusing dialectic (539 B–D), and it will not be permitted until an advanced stage of the trainees' education (at the age of 30), when they will already have undergone (*inter alia*) the elementary education for psychic harmony laid out in books 2–3.[60]

It is this education which vindicates Socratic method (and allows its reintroduction) by reflecting on its limitations (which the *Gorgias* exposed).[61] The education of *Republic* 2–3 seeks to make reason our first love. Thereby it values reason above all else, and gives it the maximum chance to do its work. This is not (as we have seen) an abstract point. As the case of Callicles shows, one's attitude to the canons of reason can have vital (practical) consequences for the way one lives one's life. Upon it may turn the possibility of living a life of integrity, since adherence to logical principles is necessary if

[60] Irwin, *Ethics*, 277, seems to see the relation between the education of books 2–3 and elenchus as one of *pre-emption*: the education gives us no grossly false beliefs, so there is no need for elenchus to remove them. But the connection, I have argued, is much tighter and more consonant with the overall shaping of the *Republic*. The education is a *precondition* for any dialectical enquiry to make progress.

[61] Something should be said at this point about the place of the *Meno* in this schema. I am not here concerned with the issue of whether the method used in the experiment with the slave is or is not the same as 'classic' Socratic elenchus (on this see e.g. Gail Fine, 'Inquiry in the *Meno*', *Cambridge Companion*, 200–26, against Gregory Vlastos, 'Elenchus and Mathematics', *American Journal of Philology*, 109 (1988), 362–96), or with the epistemological implications of the Theory of Recollection. What is important for my purposes is to emphasize that the 'positive' outcome of Socratic method in the *Meno*—the slave is led to a truth—does nothing to address the *Gorgias*'s problem of how to ensure that interlocutors are in the right psychological condition to accept the outcome of a piece of reasoning. Socrates unfolds plenty of positive proofs in the *Gorgias* but finds in Callicles an interlocutor unwilling to accept them for reasons that have nothing to do with their logical respectability. The *Meno* simply bypasses the issue by employing uncontroversial subject-matter (a basic geometrical problem) and an interlocutor (one of Meno's household slaves) who will in any event have no axe to grind when presented with a piece of reasoning. To move from Socrates' encounter with Callicles to Socrates' encounter with the slave is to move to a different universe—but not one in which Socratic method has become unproblematic, as the early books of the *Republic* show. One might none the less (on the assumption that the *Meno* lies chronologically between the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*) see the slave, from the perspective of the *Gorgias*, as a straw in the wind: an archetype of the uncorrupted dialectician who, as an everyday slave rather than the unique Socrates, offers the promise of being repeatable. This archetype awaits the *Republic*'s further reflections on how such a paragon is to be fostered in more contentious areas than basic geometry. Recall, however, the connection made in the *Gorgias* between mathematical structure and the structure of a good society (see n. 27 above). This may give a particular significance to the fact that the slave (unlike Callicles) does not 'neglect geometry' (cf. *Gorg.* 508 A 7–8).

one is to ensure one has a conception of the good life which is free of internal conflict, and which might therefore be realized in full. Such a possibility is called into question in the *Gorgias*, awaiting as it does the *Republic*'s attempt to meet the problem of Callicles. That is why Socrates' polemic against disharmonious belief in the *Gorgias* makes such an appropriate, if poignant, backdrop to his debate with Callicles about how one should live.

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THE METHODOLOGY OF THE SECOND VOYAGE AND THE PROOF OF THE SOUL'S INDESTRUCTIBILITY IN PLATO'S *PHAEDO*

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Phaedo 96–107 is one of the most controversial passages in Plato's corpus, where topics that constitute the essential part of his philosophy are concentrated: the methodology of Socrates' so-called second voyage, i.e. the method of studying in *logoi* (henceforth, 'the *logoi* method') and the method of hypothesis, in contrast with the methodology of the natural philosophers; teleological and Formal *aitiai* in contrast with material *aitiai*;[1] and the proof of the soul's indestructibility. Although 96–107 contains such a variety of topics, it has a unity in that all its parts are supposed to work together to accomplish the task of proving the soul's indestructibility, through enquiring into the whole question of the *aitia* for coming-to-be and destruction (95 E). Socrates' or Plato's[2] careful choice of the *logoi* method in 99 D–100 A shows that deciding what methodology to adopt is essential to the success of his enterprise, and I suppose

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[1] I shall use '*aitia*' for the Greek word *αἰτία* without any presupposition on whether 'reason' or 'cause' should be adopted as its translation.

[2] Although the argument of 96–107 is introduced by Socrates' autobiography, needless to say it represents Plato's thought developed on the basis of what he learnt from Socrates. In this paper I shall use 'Socrates' even when the thought attributed to him is Plato's own, as long as it does not give rise to any confusion.

that 96–107 cannot be properly understood without exact understanding of the new methodology of the second voyage. The aim of this paper is to elucidate it and thereby to shed some new light on 96–107.

1. The *logoi* method

(*a*) *Is Socrates' fear of being blinded ironical?*

Before beginning to employ the *logoi* method, Socrates was very much puzzled by physical enquiry. He says he was so utterly blinded by it that he unlearnt even what he had previously thought he knew, such as the simplest common-sense explanation of a person's growth (96 C). It was lest his soul should be completely blinded that he contrived the new method (99 D–E). The *logoi* method is thus supposed to be of decisive importance in saving him from falling into the state of 'blindness'.

However, there is strong tendency among interpreters to take Socrates' claim to have been blinded by physical enquiry to be ironical. According to them, it is philosophical reflection rather than physical enquiry that has caused Socrates' puzzlement, despite his claim to the contrary (96 C). If Socrates' claim that physical enquiry is the cause of puzzlement is ironical, the claim of puzzlement itself may also be ironical. Thus Gallop says: 'his profession of "puzzlement" may seem disingenuous, considering that he has the Theory of Forms up his sleeve'.[3] But whichever way his irony may be taken, if Socrates is ironical here, the importance of the *logoi* method as a new method will be considerably reduced, for Socrates will be regarded as having been immune to the danger of being blinded even before the adoption of the new method, thanks to his philosophical reflection, which ends up providing him with the Theory of Forms.

I cannot accept this interpretation. If blindness represents puzzlement, his claim to have been blinded by physical enquiry may be ironical, because physical enquiry does not seem to have the power to cause puzzlement on its own, as is clear from the case of the nat-

[3] D. Gallop, *Plato,* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (Oxford, 1975), 172. See also N. Fujisawa, 'Making a Start on Natural Philosophy in the *Phaedo* and Forms as *Aitiai*' (in Japanese), *Journal of Classical Studies*, 44 (1996), 1–25 at 5; M. Tanaka, *Platon*, ii. *Philosophy* (*1*) [*Platon*] (in Japanese) (Tokyo, 1981), 281.

ural philosophers who were not at all puzzled by it.[4] But according to 79 C and 99 B, where Socrates refers to the mind's blindness or to a similar state, blindness represents ignorance rather than puzzlement.[5] Now, the darkness surrounding the natural philosophers (99 B) may suggest that this passage has nothing to do with the mind's own blindness. But 'as if in the dark' (99 B 5) shows that their groping is caused by the blindness of their minds: generally speaking, someone's groping after something as if in the dark means that he is not actually in the dark but has to grope about for some reason, possibly as a result of the blindness he is suffering. The natural philosophers' groping is not caused by any external circumstances but by the blindness of their own minds,[6] and this blindness is supposed to be caused by their physical enquiry. They are so much blinded by it that they mistake for the real *aitia* things without which the *aitia* could not work, and this mistake suggests

[4] Rowe says, commenting on 96 C 3–5: '"This inquiry" (*αὕτη ἡ σκέψις*, c5, i.e. the sort encouraged by the scientists) induced the state in question in that it led to the discovery of problems when he tried to apply the same approach elsewhere' (C. J. Rowe, *Plato,* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (Cambridge, 1993), 232; cf. J. Annas, 'Aristotle on Inefficient Causes' ['Aristotle'], *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32 (1982), 311–26 at 314). This comment may suggest that it is the physical enquiry as such that has led to the discovery of problems (puzzlement). But strictly speaking, the source of puzzlement is Socrates' attempt 'to apply the same approach elsewhere', which is supposed to have originated from his philosophical reflection.

[5] Some interpreters may claim on the basis of 99 D–E that blindness represents the state in which the soul's capacity for seeing Forms is damaged. But as Gallop points out (*Phaedo*, 177), there is no allusion to Forms, at least until Socrates speaks of his recourse to the *logoi* method (see W. G. Goodrich, 'On *Phaedo* 96 A–102 A and on the *δεύτερος πλοῦς* 99 D' ['*Phaedo* 96 A–102 A'], *Classical Review*, 17 (1903), 381–4 at 383 and ibid. 18 (1904), 5–11 at 5). Thus I cannot agree with Dorter (K. Dorter, *Plato's* Phaedo*: An Interpretation* [*Phaedo*] (Toronto, 1982), 121–2), who distinguishes blindness at 96 C 5 and blindness at 99 E and takes the two states as corresponding to the two disturbances one suffers in one's approach to Forms (*Rep.* 518 A).

[6] Interpreters often read here an allusion to blind man's buff (W. J. Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*' ['Notes'], *Mnemosyne*, 11 (1958), 193–243 at 230; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 234; Rowe, *Phaedo*, 237). In this game the blindfold player gropes around, and catching and trying to identify someone, misidentifies him/her. But even if there is such an allusion, it seems misleading to interpret the natural philosophers' groping on the simple analogy of this game, for what has caused misidentification in the game is the blindfold player's carelessness in pawing over the one he has caught rather than his misjudgement about whom to catch, while in the case of the natural philosophers their mistake comes from their misjudgement that the *aitia* to be sought is some kind of material thing. It must be because of this misjudgement that they grope about, relying on touch, the sense considered to be most appropriate for catching material things (cf. *Soph.* 246 A–B).

that blindness represents ignorance.[7] In 79 C too, blindness or a similar state represents ignorance caused by physical enquiry or by the use of the senses: dizziness is the state that the use of the senses in investigation brings about, and according to 65 B, to which 'some time ago' at 79 C 2 refers, this is the state in which the mind does not grasp any truth.

It is often the case that those who are physically blinded become puzzled by finding themselves unable to see, and this may be cited as a ground for taking blindness as puzzlement rather than ignorance. But the blindness to which Socrates refers is mental blindness, which is different from physical blindness: in the former those who are blinded lose their mind's sight and become unable to notice the damage to themselves, whereas in the latter the mind's sight is still sound enough to notice physical damage, and therefore one becomes confused. Of course Socrates is an exception to this rule: even though his mind's sight was injured, he could still notice the damage to himself, true to the historical Socrates, who was aware of his own ignorance. This enables him to find himself puzzled, to be aware that he has unlearnt even those things he previously thought he knew (96 C), and not to make the same mistake as the natural philosophers (99 B). His type of ignorance is thus supposed to have arisen not only from physical enquiry but also from philosophical reflection.

Does this mean that he is after all ironical in describing physical enquiry as the cause of his type of ignorance, the true cause being physical enquiry plus philosophical reflection? I do not think so, because he clearly distinguishes between two factors that constitute his peculiar type of ignorance, blindness (ignorance in general) and unlearning (puzzlement), by describing the latter as the result of the former (cf. 96 C 5 ὥστε): he depicts only blindness as directly caused by physical enquiry, and, as to unlearning, he describes it as the result of blindness (96 C 5–6); this unlearning is supposed to be caused by physical enquiry plus philosophical reflection. He is serious both in attributing to physical enquiry the dreadful power of causing ignorance and in admitting that his mind was damaged

[7] I mean by 'ignorance' not a complete blank but a state of unclearness, which includes both the natural philosophers' type of unclearness, where one is unclear about one's own unclearness, and Socrates' type of unclearness, where one is clear about one's own unclearness.

by it to the extent that he became confused as to what to accept as true.

Of course, his initial state was not that of knowledge. So if by claiming to have been blinded he implied that his state before being blinded had been that of knowledge, he would be regarded as disingenuous. But he is careful enough to add 'at least as I myself and others thought' (96 C 4) and 'those things I formerly supposed I knew' (C 6), so that listeners may not be misled into supposing that he formerly had knowledge. Yet if his previous state was that of ignorance, does it not follow that Socrates is, in any case, ironical in claiming that his state has been worsened by being blinded, whereas in fact he has simply moved from one state of ignorance to another? I suppose that even though both are called states of ignorance, the state after being blinded is certainly worse for Socrates than the state which preceded it: for example, Anaxagoras' two states, one in which he could still catch a glimpse of the role of Intellect in the universe (97 C) and the other in which he has lost sight of it and come to employ material *aitiai* (98 B–C), are both states of ignorance, but clearly his mind's sight is more seriously damaged in the latter than in the former. If one repeats the experience of being blinded, one will end up groping about as if in the dark (99 B–C). This is why Socrates is so careful not to follow Anaxagoras and lose sight of the role of Intellect and the good as *aitia*. Socrates is quite serious in 96 C when he relates his experience of almost being blinded, and in 99 D–E when he has recourse to the *logoi* method so as not to fall into blindness.

What exactly is the factor causing blindness in physical enquiry? The image of the natural philosophers' groping about (99 B), relying on the sense of touch, suggests the close connection between the use of the senses and blindness; besides, what is claimed to be the cause of blindness in 99 E 2–4 is the act of looking at objects with the eyes and trying to lay hold of them with each of the senses. Thus, in order not to be blinded it becomes necessary to take refuge in *logoi*, escaping from the senses (99 D–E). But this does not mean that one should make no use of the senses, for even after deciding to take refuge in *logoi* Socrates continues to employ the senses, as is clear from the observation of snow melting at the approach of fire (106 A).[8] What, then, is new in the new enquiry by the *logoi* method, if not the refusal to employ the senses?

[8] Cf. D. Bostock, *Plato's* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (Oxford, 1986), 176–7.

(*b*) *What is the* logoi *method?*

In becoming puzzled by various cases of becoming bigger (96 D–97 B), Socrates has already exerted philosophical reflection, but in his diagnosis he has not yet employed the *logoi* method. So the difference between the old and the new methods does not lie in whether any philosophical reflection is involved: even the natural philosophers have exerted some degree of philosophical reflection when constructing their theories by generalizing from perceptual observations (96 B, 98 C 1–2, 99 B 6–8).

To help consider what is new in Socrates' new methodology, let us ask what he means by *logos* in 'studying in *logoi*' (99 E 5). *Logos* may mean 'proposition',[9] 'theory',[10] 'definition',[11] or 'argument'.[12] Now, the fact that even the natural philosophers present their opinions in propositions or theories or arguments may be taken as an indication that *logoi* are definitions. This supposition may gain some support from the fact that the historical Socrates was much concerned with definitions, and especially from his remark in 100 A 1–3: 'I don't at all admit that one who studies the things that are in *logoi* is any more studying them in images than one who studies them in concrete.' This remark has been taken to imply that *logoi* as well as physical things are images of something, and because physical things are images of Forms, *logoi* too have been taken to be their images; but '*logoi* as images of Forms' suggests 'definitions', and thus *logoi* have been taken to be definitions.[13]

However, a close examination of 99 E–100 A reveals that this interpretation is not sustainable. Socrates decides to study the truth

[9] Cf. Rowe, *Phaedo*, 240; F. J. González, *Dialectic and Dialogue: Plato's Practice of Philosophical Inquiry* [*Dialectic*] (Evanston, 1998), 193.

[10] Cf. N. R. Murphy, 'The *Δεύτερος Πλοῦς* in the *Phaedo*' ['*Πλοῦς*'], *Classical Quarterly* [*CQ*], 30 (1936), 40–7 at 40–1; *The Interpretation of Plato's* Republic [*Interpretation*] (Oxford, 1951), 145.

[11] Cf. R. S. Bluck, *Plato's* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (London, 1955), 13–14, 164–6; T. Gould, *Platonic Love* (London, 1963), 75–6.

[12] Cf. R. Hackforth, *Plato's* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (Cambridge, 1955), 138.

[13] Cf. Bostock, *Phaedo*, 158–60; but Bostock admits that *logoi* in the method of hypothesis are statements or propositions, and rather refuses to take *logoi* to be definitions. As to the view that 99 E–100 A suggests that for Plato both physical things and *logoi* are images of Forms, see also Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 138; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 178; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 121–3; C. J. Rowe 'Explanation in *Phaedo* 99 C 6–102 A 8' ['Explanation'], *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* [*OSAP*], 11 (1993), 49–69 at 54 n. 14; J. van Eck, 'Resailing Socrates' *Δεύτερος Πλοῦς*: A Criticism of Rowe's "Explanation in *Phaedo* 99 C 6–102 A 8"' ['Resailing'], *OSAP* 14 (1996), 211–26 at 225.

of things in *logoi* (99 E 5–6 ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν), just as the eclipse-observer attempts to study the image of the sun in water or in some such material (D 7–E 1 ἐν ὕδατι ἤ τινι τοιούτῳ). This means that *logoi* and water correspond with each other as media in which to study the target of each investigation. What, then, are their targets? Although the eclipse-observer is described as studying the sun's image (E 1 σκοπῶνται τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ), what he studies as his target is not the image itself but the sun during an eclipse (D 5–6 τὸν ἥλιον ἐκλείποντα θεωροῦντες καὶ σκοπούμενοι). So, strictly speaking, the eclipse-observer studies the sun during an eclipse in its image reflected in water; the sun's image in water may be dim and distorted, but he relies on it lest his sight be damaged by directly watching the sun, and because of this reliance on the somewhat distorting material of water, he is said to be studying in images more than one who studies in concrete (100 A 2–3 ἐν εἰκόσι μᾶλλον σκοπεῖν ἢ τὸν ἐν ἔργοις).

Logoi and water correspond with each other as media in which to study. So if we strictly follow the analogy of the eclipse-observer, we should say that Socrates has decided to study the truth of things in its image reflected in *logoi*, not that he has decided to study the truth of things simply in *logoi*. But as Socrates says, there is something inadequate in this analogy, for 'I don't at all admit that one who studies the things that are in *logoi* is any more studying them in images than one who studies them in concrete' (100 A 1–3). Let us note that his point is not that concrete things are no less images than are *logoi*;[14] he says that by studying in *logoi* one is no more studying in images than a person who studies in concrete. This means that studying in *logoi* involves nothing that corresponds to the distorted image of the sun reflected in water: although the eclipse-observer is forced to study the sun through its image in water, an enquirer who studies his objects in *logoi* studies them as directly and clearly as those who study in concrete, and what's more, without any fear of being blinded by the employment of the senses. There is no implication at 99 E–100 A that *logoi* are images of the things that are.[15]

It is true that the historical Socrates was much concerned with

[14] *Pace* Dorter, *Phaedo*, 123; González, *Dialectic*, 194.

[15] Besides, even if there were any such implication, the things that are (100 A 2 τὰ ὄντα), whose images the *logoi* would be, could not be Forms, for the same expression non-committally represents 'things' at 99 D 5. Cf. Gallop, *Phaedo*, 177; Bostock, *Phaedo*, 157 n. 2.

definitions, but I suppose this fact goes against taking *logoi* as definitions. He sought after definitions of various virtues, but as far as Plato's early dialogues are concerned, he never succeeded in attaining definitions to his satisfaction. Thus, strictly speaking, although he can be said to have studied the truth in a move 'towards' definitions, he cannot be said to have studied the truth in (99 E 5 *ἐν*) them. By employing a question-and-answer style he tried to make explicit in propositions the opinions of his interlocutors, including what they took to be definitions of some virtue, in order to examine them through arguments. This suggests that the *logoi* in question are propositions or arguments.

However, any interpretation that does not take *logoi* as definitions seems to meet the following difficulty: even the natural philosophers presented their opinions in propositions or theories or arguments; thus, as long as we take *logoi* in senses other than 'definitions', it follows that the natural philosophers have employed the *logoi* method, contrary to Socrates' claim at 99 D–E. But I suppose simple use of definitions does not constitute enquiry in *logoi*, nor does the use of *logoi* in other senses reduce the enquiry to the level of physical enquiry. What is important in the *logoi* method is to take refuge in *logoi* (99 E 5 *εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα*), and those who rely on the senses cannot be regarded as having taken refuge in *logoi*, even if they try to employ definitions in their investigation. To take refuge in *logoi* is to put oneself in a position of guarding oneself against the blinding effect of the senses, and it requires more than clearly formulating perceptual observations in propositions, arguments, theories, or even definitions.

A clue about what is required is given by the explanation of the method of hypothesis, which is supposed to be one species of the *logoi* method: 'hypothesizing on each occasion a *logos* that I judge to be strongest, I put down as true whatever seems to me to be in accord with it, about an *aitia* and everything else, and I put down as not true whatever does not' (100 A 3–7). We shall examine this passage later in more detail, but it is clear even at this point that none of the senses can be the standard by which to judge what *logos* is strongest and what is in accord with it. In order to make this kind of judgement one needs to examine critically both what one perceives and what one thinks about, and the standard of judgement here is undoubtedly intellect, the very thing that Anaxagoras failed to employ, with the result that he ended up losing sight of the

important role of Intellect and the good as *aitia* in his cosmology (98 B 8–C 2).[16] Socrates, on the other hand, could make use of his intellect and judge that it is better to stay in prison (98 C–99 A), without losing sight of the good as *aitia*.[17] This episode shows very concretely how important it is to employ intellect in thinking; what distinguishes Socrates' new methodology from the old one is the very use of intellect as the standard of judgement, escaping the influence of the senses.

This does not mean that no use should be made of the senses in the new enquiry, as I mentioned above (cf. 106 A). But at the crucial point of deciding among various accounts or propositions formed through the senses or through intellect or through their co-operation, one should not rely on the senses but on intellect as the final arbiter, and for this purpose it is necessary to take refuge in *logoi*.

This interpretation accords with the main theme of the *Phaedo*, the separation of soul and body, which is necessary to attain wisdom (65 A–66 A). Socrates is here talking as a person who reflects on his lifelong investigation, and it is natural for him to refer to an aspect of the *logoi* method, which he decided to adopt a long time ago. When talking about the separation of soul and body and emphasizing the employment of intellect by itself (66 A 1–2), he recommends not the total rejection of the senses but only the least possible communion and contact with the body (65 C 8–9, 66 A 3–5); he also prohibits only the adducing of the senses as evidence in thinking or reasoning (65 E 8–66 A 1).

To help understand the role of intellect in the *logoi* method, let us postulate three stages in which the importance of its role increases. (1) By means of intellect one generalizes from perceptual observations and forms accounts. (2) Comparing accounts thus made, one finds them conflicting, without being able to decide between them. (3) In deciding which account to accept, one does not allow any of the senses to intrude upon one's thinking but makes conscious use of intellect as the final arbiter. The natural philosophers remain at stage (1), in that they do not doubt the truth of their theories, while Socrates in the autobiography has reached stage (2), even be-

[16] As to the point that the intellect Anaxagoras did not employ is both his own intellect and Intellect in this universe, see Rowe, *Phaedo*, 235–6.

[17] Socrates made this judgement when he was sentenced to death, i.e. long after he had decided to adopt the *logoi* method.

fore adopting the new method (cf. 96 E 6–97 B 6). But he has not yet reached stage (3), because as yet he has not taken a conscious step forward to give absolute precedence to his intellect when arbitrating between conflicting accounts. This is why he cannot yet be regarded as having employed the *logoi* method.

It may be interesting to compare Socrates at stage (2) with the Pyrrhonists. They are confronted with equipollent oppositions among things perceived and things thought of (Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 1. 8–9, 31–3), without having recourse to intellect as the standard of judgement (*PH* 1. 99, 128; 2. 32–3, 57–69). As long as Socrates has not taken a decisive step to give precedence to his intellect over the senses, his attitude and state are the same as those of the Pyrrhonists, and his philosophical reflection helps only to increase the number of opposite accounts, without giving him any clue as to how to solve them. It is natural, then, for him to unlearn even what he previously thought he knew. He is, as it were, in a Pyrrhonian state of puzzlement, with the difference that while the Pyrrhonists are tranquil in suspending judgement, Socrates is frustrated by being puzzled and tries to free himself from that state by employing the *logoi* method. In fact, if Socrates had met any Pyrrhonists, they would have looked, in his eyes, like the misologists whom he censured for spending all their time on antinomies and thinking they had attained the height of wisdom (90 B–C).

Misology is as dangerous as the experience of being blinded. It comes from repeating the experience of trusting some *logos* to be true and shortly afterwards believing it to be false, without any skill of *logoi* (90 B 6–9), that is to say, without any use of the *logoi* method. Socrates issues this warning against misology just after Simmias' comparison of soul to the attunement of a musical instrument and Cebes' comparison of soul to a weaver who weaves his own cloak (85 E–88 B). Simmias' *logos* had a strange hold on those who listened to it (88 D 3–6), and its persuasiveness seems to come mainly from the ease of visualizing the soul as attunement: in fact Cebes called both his weaver and Simmias' attunement an 'image' (εἰκών) (87 B 3, D 3). In this sense Simmias and Cebes were still relying on sight and had not yet employed their intellect in the way required by the *logoi* method. Simmias himself was familiar with the method of hypothesis, one species of the *logoi* method, as is clear from his use of the expressions ὑπόθεσις and ὑποθέμενος (92 D 6, 93 C 10): he is a Pythagorean and must have employed the method when solving

some geometrical problems, but he could not properly employ it, being easily swayed by visual images and their likelihood (92 D), with the result that he failed to make consistent use of his intellect. Let us now see Socrates' method of hypothesis at 100 A ff., and examine how Socrates thinks it should be employed.

2. The method of hypothesis

(*a*) *Rowe and van Eck on the method of hypothesis*

The *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis do not have to be identical, for although a *logos* adopted as a hypothesis in the method of hypothesis must be a *logos* judged to be strongest (100 A 3–4), there is no such restriction for *logoi* in the *logoi* method. The only requirement for the *logoi* method is to take refuge in *logoi*, whatever *logoi* are, in order to guard oneself against the dreadful power of the senses and to rely on intellect as the final arbiter. This means that the *logoi* method can include Socrates' method of elenchus as long as the latter method is employed under the guidance of Socrates' intellect. But even if the method of hypothesis is not identical with the *logoi* method, it is clearly a species of the *logoi* method. This is why Socrates could proceed at once to explain the method of hypothesis without any excuse, just after referring to the *logoi* method (100 A).

We have left it open whether *logoi* in the *logoi* method are propositions, theories, definitions, or arguments. But when we think of the close relationship between the *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis, it is clear at least that *logos* represents the same thing in both methods: it is unlikely that Plato should shift its meaning between 100 A 1 and A 4. Now, the likeliest candidates for *logoi* in the method of hypothesis are propositions, for one of the *logoi* hypothesized seems to be a proposition that there is by itself something Beautiful etc. (100 B 5–7).[18] But there are interpreters who take the *logos* hypothesized at 100 B 5–7 to be the Theory of Forms.[19] It is

[18] Cf. Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 138; Bostock, *Phaedo*, 159. But it seemed so certain to Hackforth that *logoi* in the *logoi* method are arguments that he supposed that there was a shift of meaning from 'argument' to 'proposition' between 100 A 1 and A 4. However, studying in propositions (*logoi*, in plural at 100 A 4) can easily be understood as studying by argument, and the supposition of the shift of meaning seems unnecessary.

[19] e.g. Murphy, '*Πλοῦς*', 40; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 181.

necessary to look closely at Socrates' explanation of this method in order to solve this problem.

However, the task is not so easy, because Socrates explains the method in the barest of outlines. There is a controversy not only about the meaning of *logos*, but also about how to understand each procedure of the method, and even about where the method is actually applied. For example, Rowe sees its application in 100 B–101 E, while van Eck sees its first use in 102 B 3.[20] Before examining their views, let me give an overview of 100 A–107 B, translating some parts of it.

Method A: 100 A 3–7

'(1) In any case I started this way: (2) hypothesizing on each occasion a *logos* that I judge strongest, whichever that may be, (3) I put down as true whatever things seem to me to be in accord with it, both in relation to *aitia* and to everything else; and (4) I put down as not true whatever things do not.'

Theory of Forms A: 100 B–101 C

[Existence Proposition] There is something Beautiful, etc., itself by itself (100 B 5–7); [*Aitia* Proposition] it is because of the *F* that *F* things are *F* (100 C–101 C).[21]

Method B: 101 D 1–E 3

'(1) You would cling to that safety [*or* that safe thing] of the hypothesis and answer accordingly. (2) But if someone should cling to the hypothesis itself, then (3) you would dismiss him [*or* his clinging], and you would not answer until you should have considered whether the things that have started from it are in accord or discord with one another; and (4) when you have to give an account of the hypothesis itself, you would give it in the same way, once again hypothesizing another hypothesis, whichever would seem best of those above, (5) until you came to something satisfactory; and (6) you would not jumble things as the antilogicians do, by

[20] Rowe, 'Explanation', 50, 53; J. van Eck, '*Σκοπεῖν ἐν λόγοις*: On *Phaedo* 99d–103c' ['*Σκοπεῖν*'], *Ancient Philosophy*, 14 (1994), 21–40 at 26, 29, 32, 37 n. 40; 'Resailing', 218, 223.

[21] The theory of Formal *aitiai* is stated also by the use of the 'participation' formula (100 C 5–6, 101 C 2–7; also 102 B 1–2 by Phaedo), intermixed with the use of 'because of the *F*' formula (the use of dative or *διά* with accusative; 100 D 7–8, E 2–3, 5–6, 101 A 2–5, B 6–7, 102 C 2). But as Socrates says, 'I don't go so far as to insist on it [the nature of the Form–particular relationship], but only that it is because of the Beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful' (100 D 6–8), it is safe for us not to go so far as to adopt one of the Form–particular relationships but to stick to the 'because of the *F*' formula. On this point see D. Sedley, 'Platonic Causes' ['Causes'], *Phronesis*, 43 (1998), 114–32 at 116 and n. 3.

discussing the starting-point and the things that have started from it at the same time, if you should want to discover any of the things that are.'

Theory of Forms B: 102 B 1–2

Phaedo's summary in the interlude: 'it was agreed that each of the Forms is something [i.e. Existence Proposition], and that the other things, by coming to participate in these, come to have the names of these very things [i.e. *Aitia* Proposition].'

The final proof of the soul's indestructibility: 102 B–107 A

Method C: 107 B 5–9

'(1) Even if the first hypotheses are credible to you, they should still be more clearly examined. And (2) if you have scrutinized the first hypotheses satisfactorily, you will, I suppose, follow the argument to the furthest possible point to which man can follow; and if that itself becomes clear, you will seek nothing further.'

In this overview, the Theory of Forms consists of two simple propositions, the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition, and the question whether *logos* means 'theory' or 'proposition' boils down to the question whether it is the Theory of Forms consisting of these propositions that is adopted as a hypothesis, or only one of the propositions, or each of them separately.

Now, according to Rowe, whose interpretation goes back to Gallop and will be called here the 'Gallop–Rowe Interpretation', the application of the method of hypothesis is found in 100 B–101 E. We are afforded a succinct summary of this interpretation in the following quotation from Gallop:[22]

> Applications of the hypothesis that *F* things are *F* because they participate in the Form *F* are 'in accord' with that theory, whereas alternative 'reasons' yield statements that are not. Thus, '*x* is beautiful because it participates in the Form Beautiful' and '*x* is large because it participates in the Form Large' may be put down as true, since they are 'in accord' with the relevant Form–Reason hypothesis; whereas '*x* is beautiful because of its colour or shape' and '*x* is larger by a head' are not 'in accord' with the relevant hypothesis, and may therefore be put down as not true.

According to this interpretation, the initial hypothesis includes at least the Form–Reason hypothesis (our *Aitia* Proposition). But here is the first weakness of this interpretation, since it does not agree with the fact that what is apparently hypothesized just after Method A is only the Existence Proposition. Secondly, the Gallop–Rowe

[22] Gallop, *Phaedo*, 181; cf. Rowe, 'Explanation', 53; *Phaedo*, 242.

Interpretation takes the wise *aitiai* of the natural philosophers to be rejected because they are not in accord with the *Aitia* Proposition (cf. Method A4), on the supposition that the very adoption of this proposition as a hypothesis makes Socrates reject them.[23] But the truth is that they are rejected because they are in conflict not with the *Aitia* Proposition but with the following three laws of *aitia* assumed in the *Phaedo*:[24]

If x is an *aitia* for anything being F (whose opposite is un-F),
(Law 1) x must not be un-F (101 A 8–B 2);
(Law 2) x's opposite must not be an *aitia* for anything being F (97 A 7–B 3, cf. 101 B 9–C 2, C 7–8);
(Law 3) x must never be an *aitia* for anything being un-F (101 A 6–8).

Rowe tries to escape the first difficulty by supposing that Theory of Forms A was first introduced in truncated form as the Existence Proposition, and later amplified by the *Aitia* Proposition to be finally summed up as Theory of Forms B.[25] But as van Eck points out,[26] the *Aitia* Proposition is treated here merely as the next step after the Existence Proposition (100 C 3 *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις*), without any suggestion that it constitutes the initial hypothesis; besides, Theory of Forms B is nothing but Phaedo's summary and cannot therefore be a ground for taking the *Aitia* Proposition as part of the initial hypothesis. Although Phaedo describes the *Aitia* Proposition as a thing granted or agreed to (102 A 10, B 1), this is not enough

[23] Rowe, 'A Reply to van Eck' ['Reply'], *OSAP* 14 (1996), 227–40 at 232 n. 17, and 'Explanation', 53; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 181.

[24] My formulation is a modification of the three laws by Sedley ('Causes', 121). See also Bostock, *Phaedo*, 137, 151; Annas, 'Aristotle', 314, 316; G. Fine, 'Forms as Causes: Plato and Aristotle' ['Forms'], in A. Graeser (ed.), *Mathematics and Metaphysics in Aristotle* (Bern and Stuttgart, 1987), 69–112 at 96; G. B. Matthews and T. A. Blackson, 'Causes in the *Phaedo*', *Synthese*, 79 (1989), 581–91 at 584. Strictly speaking, the three laws are employed not to reject the wise *aitiai* of the natural philosophers but to reject the head as *aitia* for largeness (Law 1, Law 3) and division as *aitia* for duality (Law 2). But just as the *aitiai* of the natural philosophers are called 'wise' (100 C 10) and contrasted with the safe *aitia* (100 D–E), such *aitiai* as the head and division are called 'subtleties' (101 C 8) and contrasted with the safe *aitia* (101 C–D); this suggests that the wise *aitiai* belong to the same category as the head and division, and are rejected on the same grounds. Now, van Eck concludes from the use of the three laws that the method of hypothesis is not employed to reject the wise *aitiai* ('*Σκοπεῖν*', 29; 'Resailing', 217–18), but I shall show later that the use of the three laws can be understood in the framework of the employment of the method of hypothesis.

[25] Rowe, 'Explanation', 51–3.

[26] Van Eck, '*Σκοπεῖν*', 22, 29; 'Resailing', 215–16.

to allow it the status of a hypothesis, for things that are put down as true because of their accord with some initial hypothesis (cf. Method A3) will be regarded as granted or agreed to, without being given the status of hypotheses.

Rowe claims that a sharp line cannot be drawn between the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition in the context of the search for *aitia*, because the Existence Proposition is considered to be a condition for the *Aitia* Proposition to work as the explanation of *aitia*.[27] But it is an undeniable fact that these two propositions are introduced as separate propositions in the *Phaedo*: the Existence Proposition at 100 B 5–7 and the *Aitia* Proposition as the next step after it at 100 C 3–6. As van Eck has appropriately pointed out, if we decline to draw a sharp line between these separate propositions, it will follow that we are doing the jumbling up of things—discussing both the starting-point and the things that have started from it at the same time—against which Socrates warned (cf. Method B 6).[28]

It is true that Socrates himself makes up a confused jumble of a method of his own (97 B 6–7) and that he means by this jumble his new methodology of the *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis.[29] But it does not follow that Socrates has allowed some degree of jumbling in his methodology and decided to tolerate the jumbling of the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition. For the jumbling at 97 B 6–7 (*εἰκῇ φύρω*) is different from the jumbling at 101 E 1 (*φύροιο*) at least in that the active voice is used there instead of the middle. By using the middle voice in his warning, Socrates seems to be hinting that Cebes would jumble (confound) himself like the antilogicians if he were to discuss the starting-point and the things that have started from it at the same time. In fact, according to 90 C, those who have spent all their time on antilogical *logoi* come to suppose that all things are carried and turned upside down in things as well as in *logoi* (90 C 5 *ἄνω κάτω στρέφεται*); but the fact is that it is in their mind that all things are badly jumbled up, and they are supposed to have fallen into this state through their everyday act of jumbling (confounding) themselves. On the other hand, Socrates' confused jumble (*εἰκῇ φύρω*) reminds us of the confused jumbling (*ἔφυρον εἰκῇ πάντα*) at Aeschylus, *Prometheus*

[27] Rowe, 'Reply', 236; see also González, *Dialectic*, 354 n. 20.
[28] Van Eck, 'Resailing', 216.
[29] Professor Sedley drew my attention to this jumbling.

Bound, 450.[30] Prometheus relates here how mankind spent its time jumbling all things together, having eyes to see but seeing to no avail (447), before he taught them. This situation of mankind is exactly the same as that of Socrates before adopting the new methodology: he had eyes to see, because he was not completely blinded, but could not see to any avail, which was why he made up his own jumble of a method, having no such teacher as Prometheus (cf. 99 C 9). His jumbling is clearly different from the jumbling that is customarily done by the antilogicians, and we cannot suppose that Socrates tolerated the jumbling of the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition.

It is true that there is merit in allowing the initial hypothesis to consist of more than one simple proposition: it makes it possible to explain how it comes about that the things that have started from a hypothesis are in discord with one another (Method B3).[31] But the price paid for it seems too high, because it would considerably reduce the exactness of the method. When discord emerges among the things that have started from the hypothesis, it becomes necessary to detect where the flaw lies, but if the initial hypothesis is a theory consisting of plural propositions, a rather complicated procedure will be needed: the flaw lies either in the hypothesis itself or in the process of drawing conclusions, and if the former, it becomes necessary to decide which of the propositions that constitute the hypothesis is to blame. These complications seem to be in conflict with the high expectations Socrates entertained for his new methodology. If hypotheses are simple propositions, on the other hand, such complications are evaded, though another problem, which we have to tackle later, appears: how can discord emerge among the things that have started from a simple proposition?

It may still be claimed that the context of 100 A–B supports the Gallop–Rowe Interpretation. Socrates there makes 'what I am talking about' (100 A 8) clearer through both 'the things I have never stopped talking about' (B 1–3) and 'those much-harped-on things' (B 4–5), i.e. through Forms (B 6). If Socrates is referring to his initial hypothesis by 'what I am talking about', it seems to follow that the Theory of Forms is the initial hypothesis.[32]

But first, even if 'those much-harped-on things' represents

[30] Cf. R. D. Archer-Hind, *The* Phaedo *of Plato*, 2nd edn. (London, 1894; repr. New York, 1973), 90; J. Burnet, *Plato's* Phaedo [*Phaedo*] (Oxford, 1911), 103.

[31] Cf. Dorter, *Phaedo*, 131.

[32] Cf. Rowe, 'Explanation', 52.

Forms, what Socrates has in mind here is not, strictly speaking, the whole Theory of Forms but the Existence Proposition, as is clear from 100 B 5–7. In fact, although he has several times talked about the existence of Forms in the *Phaedo* (65 D, 74 A–B, 76 D–E, 78 D, 79 A, D, 80 B, 92 D), as is suggested by 'also in our earlier discussion' (100 B 2), until 100 C he has never talked about the role of Forms as *aitiai*.[33] Thus all we can draw from the context of 100 A–B is that when Socrates referred to his initial hypothesis by 'what I am talking about', he was thinking about the Existence Proposition.

What is more, 'a *logos* that I judge strongest, whichever that may be' in 100 A 4 (Method A2) and 'both in relation to *aitia* and to everything else' in 100 A 5–6 (Method A3) suggest that any *logos* appropriate for the present quest can be an initial hypothesis, as long as it is judged strongest: the method of hypothesis is a general method applicable to any enquiry. Socrates must have judged the Existence Proposition to be both appropriate for his quest and strongest, which is why he chose it as his initial hypothesis. In 100 A ff. Socrates attempts to explain what he is talking about (100 A 7 *βούλομαι . . . σαφέστερον εἰπεῖν*), and intends at the same time to employ the method of hypothesis for his quest by having recourse to the Existence Proposition as his initial hypothesis; it is then natural for him to clarify the method by introducing the Existence Proposition.[34] But since any *logos* appropriate for the present quest can be an initial hypothesis, as long as it is judged strongest, it is not necessary to limit the possible range of initial hypotheses to the Existence Proposition and/or the *Aitia* Proposition.

Rowe himself admits that 100 A 3–4 (Method A2) implies that there is a choice available between different *logoi*. But he seeks this choice in the list of alternative formulations of the Form–particular relationship (100 D 4–6). He supposes that he has thereby found an appropriate way of understanding 'those above' in 101 D 7 (Method B4): those above are alternative formulations of the Form–particular relationship.[35] He suggests also that the use of the plural for 'the first hypotheses' in 107 B 5 (Method C2) can be explained in the same way.[36]

[33] It is true that Socrates has referred to particular things' striving to be like Forms in 74 D, which may suggest the role of Forms as *aitiai* (Dorter, *Phaedo*, 129). But the role of Forms as *aitiai* and their role as perfect models are in principle different.

[34] For a similar view on 100 A–B see Dorter, *Phaedo*, 127–8; 217 n. 19.

[35] Rowe, 'Explanation', 53–63; *Phaedo*, 246.

[36] Rowe, 'Explanation', 61 n. 22.

But however various the alternative formulations of the Form–particular relationship are, they do not seem to satisfy the condition that the hypothesis above should be the best of those above and help to give an account of the hypothesis below (Method B4). It is true that Method B4 does not claim that the hypothesis above should be better than the hypothesis below, but it suggests at least that the hypothesis above is securer than the hypothesis below in helping to give its account. However, no alternative formulations of the Form–particular relationship seem to be securer than the *Aitia* Proposition, for Socrates explicitly says that he does not go so far as to insist on the nature of the Form–particular relationship but insists only that it is because of the Beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful; this last proposition is the safest answer to give (100 D 8).[37]

We thus cannot accept the Gallop–Rowe Interpretation. Its acceptance would force us to suppose that there is no substantial use of the method of hypothesis after 102 B. But there is evidence to the contrary: (1) Socrates adds final touches in Method C to the method of hypothesis after completing the final proof of the soul's indestructibility. (2) What Socrates is thinking of as 'the argument' at 107 B 7 is clearly the final proof, as is suggested by his immediate mention of the soul being *ἀθάνατος* at 107 C 2; this suggests that the first hypotheses (107 B 5) include some premiss or premisses having to do with the final proof. (3) When Socrates describes the *Aitia* Proposition as 'the safest' (100 D 8) or 'safe' (E 1), he must be thinking that its safety has something essential to do with the procedures of the method of hypothesis; this is supported by the expression 'that safety [*or* that safe thing] of the hypothesis' (Method B1) too. But Socrates regards as safe even such subtler answers as that a body is hot because fire is present in it (105 B–C), and this suggests that the method of hypothesis is used in the introduction of the subtler answers as well.[38]

[37] For Rowe the initial hypothesis to be explained through the hypothesis above is '*x* comes to be (or is) *F* by coming to share (or sharing) in the *F*' (e.g. Rowe, *Phaedo*, 246), but I would rather stick to the *Aitia* Proposition expressed in the 'because of the *F*' formula. See n. 21 above. Because the hypothesis above is securer than the hypothesis below in helping to give its account, the interpretation of González is also unacceptable when he cites as an example of hypotheses above the subtler answer 'fire is the cause of something being hot' (*Dialectic*, 205 and 356 n. 30).

[38] Rowe, 'Explanation', 64–5, supposes that we should not take at face value Socrates' presentation of the subtler answers as safe (cf. also Gallop, *Phaedo*, 212), but I cannot agree with him, as I shall explain later.

Van Eck's interpretation presents a clear contrast to the Gallop–Rowe Interpretation in seeing in 102 B 3–D 3 (or in 102 A 10–D 3) the first example of studying in *logoi*, i.e. studying by the method of hypothesis; he takes the preceding passage as Socrates' enlightening remarks on his new kind of *aitia*.[39] But this interpretation is also unacceptable. First, we can cite Rowe's argument against van Eck: as van Eck himself admits, statements of the type of the *Aitia* Proposition (100 C 4–6) are supposed to be 'in accord with' statements of the type of the Existence Proposition (100 B 5–7).[40] It follows, then, that already in 100 C Socrates is employing the method of hypothesis.

If the method of hypothesis is already employed in 100 C and the *Aitia* Proposition is accepted because of its accord with the Existence Proposition according to Method A3, it turns out likely that the procedure of Method A4 is employed also for rejecting the wise *aitiai* of the natural philosophers. But van Eck rejects this possibility, declining to see in 100 C 9–D 3 an illustration of the method of hypothesis.[41] He insists that Socrates 'does not argue for the falsity of the statements that point to' the wise *aitiai* but simply 'dismisses' them 'because they confuse him (100 D 3)', taking this as evidence that the method of hypothesis is not employed in rejecting the wise *aitiai*.

But I wonder whether Method A4 requires that the falsity of any statement be argued for: all Socrates says is that he puts down as not true what does not seem to be in accord with his hypothesis, and this is certainly different from arguing for the falsity of anything; putting down something as not true can be supposed to be the same as dismissing it. Socrates may be dismissing the wise *aitiai* just because they are in non-accord or discord[42] with some strong hypothesis or hypotheses, and this may be what he means by saying that they confuse him.

We have already seen that the wise *aitiai* are actually rejected because they are in conflict with the three laws of *aitia*. Does this mean that the three laws are regarded as hypotheses by Socrates? This supposition is attractive because if the three laws are ad-

[39] See n. 20 above.

[40] Rowe, 'Reply', 230; see van Eck, 'Resailing', 216, 219–20.

[41] Van Eck, '*Σκοπεῖν*', 29; 'Resailing', 217–18.

[42] The discord in Method B3 is supposed to be identical with the non-accord in Method A4, for in ancient music what was not in accord was in discord. See M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (New York, 1992), 160.

mitted as hypotheses, they can be counted among 'those above' in 101 D (Method B4) and 'the first hypotheses' in 107 B (Method C2). But we have seen, on the other hand, in our examination of the Gallop–Rowe Interpretation that what is actually hypothesized in the *Phaedo* is only the Existence Proposition. This makes us doubt whether the three laws can be taken to be hypotheses. In order to examine whether they can be so regarded, let us use an examination of the status of the *Aitia* Proposition as a starting-point.

(*b*) *The status of the* Aitia *Proposition*

As we have seen, Gallop and Rowe take the *Aitia* Proposition to be part of the whole hypothesis, which consists of the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition. But this interpretation has now been shown to be unacceptable. On the other hand, van Eck regards only the Existence Proposition as a hypothesis, taking statements of the type of the *Aitia* Proposition as 'the *αἰτία* statements based upon the hypothesis'.[43] His interpretation seems to be supported by the following facts: in explaining Theory of Forms A, Socrates explicitly treats only the Existence Proposition as a hypothesis (100 B 5), regarding the *Aitia* Proposition as what has started from it (100 B 5 *ἄρχομαι ἀπ' ἐκείνων*; B 8 *ἐκ τούτων*; C 3 *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις*), and in Method B6 he advises Simmias and Cebes not to jumble the hypothesis and the things that have started from it (101 E 2–3 *τῶν ἐξ ἐκείνης ὡρμημένων*; cf. 101 D 4).[44]

However, I believe that a body of evidence suggests that the *Aitia* Proposition is given the status of a hypothesis. For in Method B1 Socrates advises Cebes to 'cling to *ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς* [that safety *or* that safe thing] of the hypothesis' (101 D 1–2), disowning those wise *aitiai* (101 C 7–9). The contrast of the two kinds of *aitiai* here is the same as the contrast at 100 C–D between the wise *aitiai* and

[43] Van Eck, 'Resailing' 216–17, 223 n. 12; '*Σκοπεῖν*', 29; also Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 143.

[44] Blank distinguishes between *τὰ ἀπ' ἐκείνης ὁρμηθέντα* (101 D 4) and *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις* (100 C 3) and says, 'Participation is not called a *ὁρμηθέν* of the hypothesis that Forms exist, but is rather said to be *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις*' (D. L. Blank, 'Socrates' Instructions to Cebes: Plato, "Phaedo" 101d–e' ['Instructions'], *Hermes*, 114 (1986), 146–63 at 152 n. 21). But even if these expressions do not mean the same thing, the similarity of *ὁρμάω* and *ἄρχομαι* (100 B 5), which is employed together with *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις*, suggests that they are somehow related; it seems to me that *τὰ ἐξῆς ἐκείνοις* (what comes next) can cover the rejection of the wise *aitiai* (100 D 1–3) as well as the admission of the *Aitia* Proposition, and that this *Aitia* Proposition is a *ὁρμηθέν* of the initial hypothesis, as I shall show later.

the *Aitia* Proposition, with the latter being depicted, there too, as the safest answer to cling to (100 D 8–E 3). Therefore, in his advice at 101 D 1–2 Socrates is supposed to be thinking of the *Aitia* Proposition, and this means that '*ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς* of the hypothesis' should be understood either as (1) 'that safe character/factor of the hypothesis, the *Aitia* Proposition', or (2) 'that safe part, the *Aitia* Proposition, of the hypothesis consisting of the Existence Proposition and the *Aitia* Proposition', or (3) 'that safe consequent, the *Aitia* Proposition, of (from) the hypothesis, the Existence Proposition'.[45] In all of (1)–(3) Socrates is referring back by 'that' (*ἐκείνου*) to 100 D, where he presented the *Aitia* Proposition as the safest answer to give both to himself and to anyone else; but according to (1) he represents by *ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς* the safe character/factor he found in the *Aitia* Proposition, while according to (2) and (3) he represents by the same expression the *Aitia* Proposition itself. Now, among these three alternatives we cannot accept (2), because it forces us to include two propositions in one hypothesis and to do the jumbling up against which Socrates warned. On the other hand, (3) is rather an unnatural way of taking *ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς τῆς ὑποθέσεως* (101 D 2). What is left, then, is (1).

But if *τῆς ὑποθέσεως* in this expression refers to the *Aitia* Proposition according to (1), why did Socrates not say more simply 'that safe hypothesis' (*ἐκείνης τῆς ἀσφαλοῦς ὑποθέσεως*) instead of using the roundabout expression *ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς τῆς ὑποθέσεως*. I suppose it is because if he said 'that safe hypothesis', it would refer to the particular proposition 'it is because of the Beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful' (100 D 7–8), and this could not be employed for explaining *aitiai* for something being large, small, numerous, two, and one (101 A–C). What Socrates can rely on in these cases is the very safe character/factor that makes that particular proposition a safe and secure hypothesis. This is why Socrates said 'that safe character/factor of the hypothesis'. Thus there is no problem about regarding the *Aitia* Proposition as a hypothesis.

However, is this status of the *Aitia* Proposition compatible with its status as what has started from the initial hypothesis (the Existence Proposition)? Can what has started from a hypothesis be a

[45] For (1) see Rowe, 'Explanation', 57, 62–3; for (2) Bostock, *Phaedo*, 159 n. 4, and I. Mueller, 'Mathematical Method and Philosophical Truth', in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge, 1992), 170–99 at 197 n. 28; for (3) P. Plass, 'Socrates' Method of Hypothesis in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis*, 5 (1960), 103–15 at 111–12.

hypothesis itself? According to Method B4, there can be an occasion when one has to give an account of the Existence Proposition through a hypothesis above. This means that the Existence Proposition itself will be put down as true, on such an occasion, because of its accord with some hypothesis above; the status of the Existence Proposition, then, will be that of what has started from a hypothesis above: what was a hypothesis can take the status of what has started from a hypothesis above. This means that, contrariwise, propositions that have started from a hypothesis above can take the status of hypotheses if they satisfy certain conditions for being hypotheses. As to the conditions, we have seen that 'a *logos* that I judge strongest, whichever that may be' (Method A2) and 'both in relation to *aitia* and to everything else' (Method A3) suggest that any *logos* can be an initial hypothesis, as long as it is appropriate for the present quest and judged to be strongest. The *Aitia* Proposition is such a *logos* and will be very reasonably regarded as a hypothesis for further enquiries, even though it has started from the Existence Proposition.

What about the three laws? They are certainly the strongest *logoi* and are relevant to the quest in the *Phaedo* as the laws of *aitia*; besides, the wise answers of the natural philosophers were rejected because they are in conflict with them. Thus, if 'non-accord' (Method A4) or 'discord' (Method B3) means 'conflict' or 'inconsistency', there will be no obstacle to regarding them as hypotheses. But how to take 'accord' and 'non-accord/discord' is itself a controversial question.

(*c*) *Accord and discord*

As to 'accord', it seems needless to say that it is not limited to the relation of entailments or deduction.[46] For if the use of the method is limited to discovering entailments, its role as a heuristic method (cf. 100 B 8 *ἀνευρήσειν*; 101 E 3 *εὑρεῖν*) will be considerably curtailed. Second, the *Aitia* Proposition, which is supposed to be in accord with the Existence Proposition, is not deducible from it.[47] Third, if 'accord' means 'is deducible from', 'non-accord' (Method A4) is supposed to mean 'not deducible from'; but in this case the

[46] Cf. Rowe, 'Reply', 233; C. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* [*Plato*] (Cambridge, 1996), 315–16.

[47] *Pace* R. Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic* [*Dialectic*], 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1953), 126–7.

absurdity follows that Socrates puts down as not true whatever propositions are not deducible from his hypothesis.[48]

On this last ground Robinson argues that what is meant here is that one should take propositions deducible from the hypothesis to be true, and those whose contradictories follow from the hypothesis to be untrue.[49] But as has often been pointed out, this way of taking the pair 'accord/discord' is unnatural. Besides, if 'accord' represents deducibility, the verb ὁρμᾶν ('start', 101 D 4, E 3) should also represent deducibility, for what has 'started' from a hypothesis is supposed to be a proposition that is in 'accord' with it; but logical consequence is usually represented by συμβαίνειν, not ὁρμᾶν.[50]

Robinson supposes that ὁρμηθέντα is exceptionally used here in the sense of logical consequences. But this is unacceptable. For according to Method B3 there can be an occasion when one has to consider whether things that have started (ὁρμηθέντα) from a hypothesis are in accord or discord with one another. What does 'accord' mean here? If it represents the same relation as ὁρμᾶν and, therefore, deducibility as we expect and Robinson suggests, it follows that in Method B3 Socrates is advising Cebes to consider whether logical consequences of a hypothesis are deducible from one another, which does not make any sense.[51] On the other hand, if 'accord' in Method B3 means 'consistency', it follows that Socrates allows for an occasion when one has to consider whether the logical consequences (ὁρμηθέντα) of a hypothesis are consistent with one another; but to allow for such an occasion would be to assume that it is possible for the logical consequences of a hypothesis to be inconsistent with one another, which is a logical impossibility.[52]

[48] Robinson, *Dialectic*, 127. See also J. Gentzler, '"συμφωνεῖν" in Plato's *Phaedo*' ['συμφωνεῖν'], *Phronesis*, 36 (1991), 265–76 at 267.

[49] Robinson, *Dialectic*, 128–9; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 128 and 217 n. 16; W. W. Tait, 'Plato's Second Best Method', *Review of Metaphysics*, 39 (1986), 455–82 at 465; see also Gallop, *Phaedo*, 180.

[50] Robinson, *Dialectic*, 129; Gentzler, 'συμφωνεῖν', 271.

[51] Robinson tries to draw some sense from this section by supplying '(supposed)' in the following way: '"you would refuse to answer until you had considered the (supposed) consequences of the hypothesis to see if they follow from each other or fail to follow". If they fail to follow they are not really consequences' (*Dialectic*, 130). But however many times one may check the consequences to see that they are really consequences, the likelihood of their really being consequences will not increase at all if the first attempt to draw logical consequences has already been carried out with supreme rigour, as long as the procedure of checking logical consequence remains the same. Besides, 'with one another' (101 D 5) is strange if logical consequence is in question here.

[52] Robinson, *Dialectic*, 130.

I take it that 'accord/discord' should be taken in their most natural sense as 'consistency/inconsistency',[53] and that things that have started (*ὁρμηθέντα*) from a hypothesis are propositions put down as true because of their consistency with it. If 'accord/discord' and *ὁρμηθέντα* are taken this way, a simple proposition can indeed give rise to inconsistency among things that have started from it and been put down as true because of their consistency with it; thus the possibility of inconsistency in Method B3 is sufficiently explained.

But against this interpretation it can be argued that it will then follow that Socrates is putting down as true whatever propositions are consistent with the first hypothesis,[54] and that this is absurd for the following reasons:[55] (1) a number of propositions that are consistent with the initial hypothesis can be false; (2) the propositions that are consistent with the initial hypothesis can include propositions that are inconsistent with one another, and we cannot reasonably put all of them down as true; (3) putting down as true any proposition that is consistent with the initial hypothesis would not lead us in any given direction, but would merely accumulate a heap of acceptable propositions.

My reply is as follows: as to (3), we should note that this method is employed in the context of discovery; the use of the verb *ὁρμᾶν* (100 A 3, 101 D 4, E 3) suggests that one starts an enquiry with some definite target in mind, and this imposes restrictions on the domain of propositions that can be adopted in the enquiry, with the result that not every consistent proposition is put down as true.[56] This, then, alleviates difficulty (2). Besides, as I shall show later concerning Method B3, situations corresponding to (1) and (2) are supposed to be taken into account by Socrates and made use of for some definite purpose in the method of hypothesis.

[53] Robinson himself admits that this 'seems a much more natural and obvious metaphor' (*Dialectic*, 126).

[54] Cf. Robinson, *Dialectic*, 126–9; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 180.

[55] These three reasons are cited by Gentzler, '*συμφωνεῖν*', 266. Gentzler proposes to understand '*P* is in accord with *Q*' as '*P* is consistent with *Q* and stands in *either* a suitable inductive *or* deductive inferential relation to *Q*' (268–9). But in addition to the difficulty of understanding what can stand in a suitable inductive inferential relation to the Existence Proposition, the proposed interpretation forces us to reject as not true even propositions that are likely to be true. Gentzler recognizes this and tries to understand 'accord/discord' as representing contraries rather than contradictories (269–70) (cf. also González, *Dialectic*, 352 n. 11). But 'accord/non-accord' or 'accord/discord' should be taken as contradictories: they come from music, and in music they stand in contradictory relation (see n. 42 above).

[56] On this point see González, *Dialectic*, 196 and 352 n. 12.

There are other restrictions that limit the range of propositions to be put down as true. To identify these, let us see again why Socrates rejected the wise answers of the natural philosophers: he rejected them because they are inconsistent with the three laws of *aitia*. If 'accord/discord' means 'consistency/inconsistency' in accordance with our interpretation, it follows that the wise answers are rejected because of their discord with the three laws, and when we take it into consideration that the three laws of *aitia* are both the strongest and most appropriate propositions for the enquiry about *aitiai* and thus satisfy the conditions for being hypotheses (100 A 3–4), the natural conclusion to draw is that the three laws indeed have the status of hypotheses. Suppose that the three laws are hypotheses, then even if 'accord/discord' means 'consistency/inconsistency', not every proposition in accord with the initial hypothesis is accepted as true thanks to the restrictions imposed by the three laws, and thus difficulties (1) and (2) lose much power.

Against this proposal it may be objected that according to our interpretation it turns out that the hypotheses actually used in Method A4 are not what is explicitly introduced as a hypothesis (the Existence Proposition) but some other tacit assumptions (the three laws); besides, the singular is used to represent the hypothesis in Method A2–4 and Method B4, whereas more than one hypothesis turn out to be posited according to our interpretation. However, let us carefully look at Socrates' remark: 'hypothesizing on each occasion a *logos* that I judge strongest, *whichever that may be*' (Method A2); 'hypothesizing another hypothesis, *whichever should seem best of those above*' (Method B4). The italicized phrases suggest that any number of hypotheses can be hypothesized as long as they are judged both strongest (or best) and relevant to the investigation in question. As to the reason why the three laws were not explicitly cited as hypotheses in 100 B–E, we can point out that Socrates was here more interested in introducing the *Aitia* Proposition than in rejecting the wise *aitiai*, and that for this purpose it was necessary for him to focus on the Existence Proposition as the initial hypothesis.

In this respect it is worth noting that the Existence Proposition and the three laws are not on the same level, even if they are all taken to be hypotheses. The three laws of *aitia* are laws that one must observe in any enquiry about *aitia*. On the other hand, the Existence Proposition is a hypothesis from which the *Aitia* Proposition is

drawn by observing these general laws. Keeping in line with this difference of role between the three laws and the Existence Proposition, Socrates seems to be using two different expressions, 'be in accord with' (*συμφωνεῖν*: 100 A 5, 101 D 5) and 'start from' (*ὁρμᾶν ἀπό/ἐκ*: 101 D 4, E 2–3; cf. 100 B 5 *ἄρχομαι ἀπό*). The *Aitia* Proposition 'is in accord with' the three laws, but it cannot be said to 'have started from' them, whereas it can be said both to have 'started from' the Existence Proposition and to 'be in accord with' it.[57]

Cebes may not be so clear about this role of the three laws as Socrates is, but if he follows Socrates' advice to scrutinize the first hypotheses further (cf. Method C), and considers why he can accept the *Aitia* Proposition as a safe hypothesis but not the wise answers, he will never fail to recognize that the *Aitia* Proposition satisfies the three laws in the following way while the wise answers do not.

It is evident that the Beautiful satisfies the three laws:
(Law 1) The Beautiful is not ugly.
(Law 2) The Ugly is not an *aitia* for anything being beautiful.
(Law 3) The Beautiful is never an *aitia* for anything being ugly.

He will then notice that the three laws can also be counted among the first hypotheses.

(*d*) *The safety of the subtler* Aitiai

It seems that the three laws also help Socrates accept the subtler *aitiai*. But there are various problems surrounding the subtler *aitiai*, and it is time to deal with them. Let me first summarize how Socrates introduces them in 103 C–105 E.

More things that do not admit the un-*F* in addition to the *F*:
(S1) It is not only the *F* that never admits the un-*F*, but also snow/fire will never admit hotness/coldness (the un-*F*), but when hotness/coldness approaches, snow/fire either withdraws or perishes (103 C 10–E 1).
(S2) Thus not only is the *F* entitled to be called by the name of the *F* for all time, but [there is][58] something else too,

[57] González (*Dialectic*, 197 and 352 n. 13) also distinguishes between 'start from' and 'be in accord with', but in a way different from mine.

[58] On the question of what verb should be supplied before 'something else too' see n. 73 below.

which, though not being the *F*, always has the character (*μορφή*) of the *F*, whenever it exists (103 E 2–5).

Clarification with the examples of the three etc.:

(S3) Not only must the odd always have the name 'odd', but also the three, the five, etc. must always be called 'odd' because they are by nature such that they can never be apart from the odd (103 E 5–104 B 5).

(S4) Thus, not only does the *F* not admit the un-*F*, but also all things which, though not being the *F*, always have the *F* do not admit the Form (*ἰδέα*) of the un-*F*, but when the un-*F* approaches, they either perish or withdraw; the three will sooner perish than endure becoming even while still being three (104 B 6–C 10).

First definition of what does not admit the un-*F* and its explanation:

(S5) They are defined as follows (104 C 11 *ὁρισώμεθα*): they are things that compel the thing they occupy to have not only their own Form (*ἰδέα*), but always the Form of the *F* (104 C 11–D 3).

(S6) Explanation by an example: anything the Form (*ἰδέα*) of three occupies must be not only three but also odd, and the Form opposite to the character (*μορφή*) of the odd (the Form of the even) will never visit the three; thus the three has no part in the even (*ἄμοιρα τοῦ ἀρτίου*) and is *ἀν*-even (*ἀνάρτιος*) (104 D 4–E 6).[59]

Second definition and its explanation:

(S7) It is not only the *F* that does not admit the un-*F*, but also the thing that brings up the *F* into whatever it enters never admits the un-*F* (104 E 7–105 A 5).

(S8) Explanation by examples: the five/the ten/the double will not admit the Form of the even/odd/odd; nor will the one-and-a-half etc. admit the Form of the whole (105 A 5–B 4).

Subtler answers and the soul's being *ἀθάνατος*:

(S9) Fire/(snow/)fever/unit is an *aitia* for something in which each comes to be being hot/(cold/)ill/odd (105 B 5–C 8).[60]

[59] Instead of 'un-*F*', which I have used so far to represent the opposite of *F*, I shall use '*ἀν*-*F*' to mean 'having no part (*ἄμοιρα*) in the *F*' (104 E 3) or 'not admitting the *F*' (104 E 8, 9, 105 A 2, 5, 7, B 1, D 10–11, 13, 16, E 2, 4).

[60] Snow is not explicitly mentioned as a subtler *aitia* here. But Socrates' reference to snow and fire as a pair (103 C–D, 106 A) suggests that it is a subtler *aitia* in just the same way as fire is. In fact, snow makes a wine-cooler (*psyktēr*) cold, in which

(S10) Soul too is an *aitia* for something that it occupies being alive, and because it meets the definition (S5, S7) of what does not admit the un-*F*, it never admits death; it is ἀ-dead (ἀθάνατος) (105 C 9–E 9).

Let me first deal with a difficulty concerning 104 D 1–3 in S5 above. I took ἅ as the subject, and ὅτι as the object, of κατάσχῃ and ἀναγκάζει and thus considered the definienda here to be a class of occupying things,[61] but some interpreters take ὅτι as the subject and ἅ as the object, taking the definienda to be a class of occupied things; in which case S5 runs like this: 'They are defined as follows: they are things that are compelled by whatever occupies them to have not only its own Form, but always the Form of the *F*.'[62] I reject this reading for the following reasons. (1) It leaves αὐτό at 104 D 2 unexplained.[63] (2) Two definitions of what does not admit the un-*F* (104 D 1–3 in S5 and 105 A 3–5 in S7) should be identical, for Socrates offers the second definition on Cebes' request for clarification of the first (104 D 4); S5 should be read thus in accordance with 'the thing that brings up the *F* into whatever it enters' (S7), where the definienda are a class of occupying things, and this suggests our interpretation of S5.[64] (3) The expression ὅτι ἂν κατάσχῃ (104 D 1) in the definition (S5) reappears in S10 (105 D 3), at the crucial point where Socrates confirms that soul meets the definition and is ἀθάνατος, and the fact that ὅτι there is the object of the verb suggests that ὅτι here (104 D 1) is also the object. Now, interpreters

it is present, and thereby cools wine in a *kratēr* (cf. L. Adkins and R. A. Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1997), 367). I thus cannot accept Taylor's view that 'Plato appears here . . . to be thinking . . . of something's being cold because it *is* snow' (C. C. W. Taylor, 'Forms as Causes in the *Phaedo*' ['Forms'], *Mind*, 78 (1969), 45–59 at 50).

[61] Cf. Burnet, *Phaedo*, 119–20; Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 151; Bluck, *Phaedo*, 123; D. O'Brien, 'The Last Argument of Plato's *Phaedo*: I' ['Argument'], *CQ* NS 17 (1967), 198–231 at 214–16. As to αὐτῷ (104 D 3), I have followed Bluck (*Phaedo*, 200) in adopting αὖ τῳ.

[62] Cf. H. Tredennick, *Plato: The Last Days of Socrates* [*Last Days*] (Harmondsworth, 1954), 165; H. Erbse, 'Philologische Anmerkungen zu Platons *Phaidon* 102a–107a' ['Anmerkungen'], *Phronesis*, 14 (1969), 97–106 at 98 n. 1; E. Hartman, 'Predication and Immortality in Plato's *Phaedo*' ['Predication'], *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* [*AGP*], 54 (1972), 215–28 at 223 n. 11; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 57–8, 202, 235–6; Rowe, *Phaedo*, 256.

[63] Cf. M. D. Reeve, 'Socrates' Reply to Cebes in Plato's *Phaedo*' ['Reply'], *Phronesis*, 20 (1975), 199–208 at 204; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 236; D. Frede, 'The Final Proof of the Immortality of the Soul in Plato's *Phaedo* 102a–107a' ['Proof'], *Phronesis*, 23 (1978), 27–41 at 35.

[64] Cf. Frede, 'Proof', 35.

who take ὅτι as the subject and ἄ as the object at 104 D 1 point out that there is a consonance of ἄ between 104 D 1 and 104 D 5, in the latter of which ἄ is the object of κατάσχῃ.[65] But Socrates seems to have attended to the consonance of ὅτι rather than to the consonance of ἄ, because when we think of our own practice, we tend to keep the expression as unchanged as possible when confirming that the definition is met by some particular thing, while when explaining the definition we tend to change the expression to facilitate the understanding of listeners.[66]

Anyway, in 51–10 Socrates first cites snow and fire, examples of what are later called 'subtler *aitiai*', as things that do not admit the un-*F*, and clarifies what kind of things he has in mind by introducing the three etc. as examples, in order finally to bring in the subtler *aitiai* and prove that soul is ἀθάνατος. I take it that in presenting the subtler *aitiai* at this crucial stage for the final proof, Socrates cannot be ironical, nor is he confused about the status of the subtler *aitiai*. But there are interpreters who take him to be ironical or confused. Their reasons are as follows.[67]

(1) Socrates claims that the subtler *aitiai* are safe (105 B 8). But some of the subtler *aitiai* seem no less mechanistic than the wise *aitiai* (100 C 10). In fact the expression 'subtler' (105 C 2) reminds us of the wise *aitiai*, which were called 'subtleties' (101 C 8). How can the subtler answers be 'safe' from those dangers that threatened the wise *aitiai*? Socrates must be ironical or confused.

(2) Soul/unit (i.e. the extra unit) may be a necessary as well as a sufficient condition for something being alive/odd, but fever/snow seems to be merely a sufficient condition of something being ill/

[65] e.g. J. Schiller, '*Phaedo* 104–105: Is the Soul a Form?', *Phronesis*, 12 (1967), 50–8 at 54.

[66] When my reading is adopted, there arises the problem of how to take τὴν αὑτου ἰδέαν (104 D 2): as 'its [i.e. the occupied thing's] own form' with Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 151, and Bluck, *Phaedo*, 123; or as 'their [i.e. the occupiers'] own form' with Burnet, *Phaedo*, 119–20, and O'Brien, 'Argument', 214–15. It seems better to adopt the latter reading, because an occupied thing need not be compelled by an occupier to have its own Form, having it even before being occupied by the occupier.

[67] Some of the following reasons may be incompatible with one another, but because I am going to argue against them, their incompatibility is immaterial. (1)–(5) are presented by Rowe, 'Explanation', 64–7 with n. 28, and *Phaedo*, 259. For (1) see also Gallop, *Phaedo*, 212; for (2) Gallop, *Phaedo*, 210; Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 161; Fine, 'Forms', 97, although Fine points out that 'having a head [not 'having a head's extra height'] is not sufficient for being tall'; for (4) Dorter, *Phaedo*, 147, 160; for (6) Gallop, *Phaedo*, 211; Fine, 'Forms', 97; for (7) Gallop, *Phaedo*, 213.

cold.[68] Thus fever/snow seems to be indistinguishable from such answers as that a man is taller than another because he has a head's extra height, which specifies only a sufficient condition. By presenting the subtler *aitiai* Socrates seems to have returned to the level of the wise *aitiai*.

(3) How will the subtler answers fit in those cases which originally led to the introduction of the *Aitia* Proposition?

(4) The subtler answer, fever, is strangely trying to explain a genus (illness) by reference to one of its species or symptoms (fever).

(5) Why should we not say that the unit brings about evenness, when it 'comes to be in' an odd number?

(6) Fever cannot be a safe *aitia* for illness, because the opposite of fever, hypothermia, could also be its *aitia*, in violation of Law 2.

(7) Fever and unit among the subtler *aitiai* do not seem to satisfy the condition specified in S2 and S4, in that they are not themselves ill and odd.

(8) When Socrates defines what does not admit the un-*F* as 'things that compel the thing they occupy to have . . . their own Form' (104 D 2 *τὴν αὑτοῦ ἰδέαν*), he seems to be thinking of Forms.[69] This is also suggested by Socrates' reference to 'the Form of three' (104 D 5–6 in S6). It seems also (at least to some interpreters) that some subtler *aitiai* are Forms.[70] However, as we have seen in (1) above, subtler *aitiai* seem no less mechanistic than the wise *aitiai* of the natural philosophers.

Let us start by dealing with (8). I do not think the subtler *aitiai* are Forms: it is very difficult to conceive the unit (the extra unit)

[68] Fire is sometimes regarded as nothing but a sufficient condition for hotness, and sometimes as a condition that is necessary as well as sufficient. For the interpretation of 'unit' as 'the unit extra to two equal parts', see Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 158 n. 2 and 161; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 210; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 148. Some interpreters prefer to take *μονάς* as the Form of one, which makes something that it occupies one, and they take one to be an odd number (O'Brien, 'Argument', 224–5). But according to the normal view of Greek mathematicians, two is the first number (cf. Gallop, *Phaedo*, 210). Besides, it seems natural for Socrates, who has just said that the double will not admit the Form of the odd (105 A 7–B 1), to think of the unit extra to the double as an *aitia* of oddness.

[69] Cf. Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 151 and n. 5, 156; O'Brien, 'Argument', 216–17; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 203 ff., Version B.

[70] Cf. Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 156, 161–2; D. Keyt, 'The Fallacies in *Phaedo* 102a–107b' ['Fallacies'], *Phronesis*, 8 (1963), 167–72 at 168 n. 2; G. Vlastos, 'Reasons and Causes in the *Phaedo*' ['Reasons'], *Philosophical Review*, 78 (1969), 291–325 at 317 ff.

as a Form.[71] The use of 'occupy' does not make it necessary to take occupiers to be Forms, for soul, fire, snow, fever, and the unit may perfectly well be said to occupy a body, a stick, a wine-cooler (*psyktēr*), a body, and a number without being themselves Forms.[72] Nor does their compelling what they occupy to have their own Forms make it necessary to take each of them to be a Form. For *x* to compel *y* to have the Form of *x* is not for *x* to force *y* to have the same external form or shape as *x*; it is rather for *x* to enable *y* to exert the power of *x*. Each of the subtler *aitiai*, then, in fact enables what it occupies to exert the power of that *aitia*: soul enables a body to perform various activities of soul; fire enables a stick to burn any combustible thing; snow makes a *psyktēr* cool wine in a *kratēr* just in the same way as snow in a *kratēr* cools wine; fever enables a body which is made feverish by it to make other bodies feverish (probably through contagion); the unit enables a number which is made odd by the addition of the unit to two equal parts to make other numbers odd by its own addition to two equal parts.

It is true that the subject of 'occupy' at 104 D 6 is the Form of three, but this does not make it necessary to take the subtler *aitiai* to be Forms. For 'occupy' (κατάσχῃ) is such a general term as to cover occupation by Forms and occupation by particular things. Socrates is supposed to be employing in S1–10 a strategy of adding items that both occupy other things and do not admit the un-*F*, starting from the *F* itself. His goal is to elucidate the subtler *aitiai* (S1, S2); but to reach it he introduces the Forms of three etc. first (S3, S4), and then, through employing these as paradigmatic cases, he succeeds in defining what occupies other things and does not admit the un-*F* (S5–8), in order finally to confirm that the subtler *aitiai* (e.g. soul) meet this definition and do not admit the un-*F* (e.g. death) (S9, S10). What is required of the subtler *aitiai* in this sequence of reasoning is simply to meet the definition, and not to have the status of Forms.

Socrates is careful in his description of the subtler *aitiai*. Although he describes the Forms of the three etc. as the things that are entitled to be called by the name of the *F* for all time (103 E

[71] For the argument that fire, snow, and soul should not be regarded as Forms see also Frede, 'Proof', 34–6; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 146–7; C. Weller, 'Fallacies in the *Phaedo* Again', *AGP* 77 (1995), 121–34 at 123–31. Fine regards fire and fever as physical entities ('Forms', 95).

[72] Concerning soul, see Burnet, *Phaedo*, note on 105 D 3 (p. 123).

3–4 in S2), as the things that must always be called *F* (104 A 2–3, A 6 in S3), or as the things that are always *F* (104 B 1–4 in S3), he never explicitly describes the subtler *aitiai* in such terms;[73] he says only that things like snow and fire always have the character of the *F* (the hot and the cold) (103 E 4–5 in S2), that they always have the *F* (104 B 8–9 in S4), that they compel the thing they occupy always to have the Form of the *F* (104 D 1–3 in S5), and that they bring up the *F* into whatever they enter (105 A 3–4 in S7; cf. 104 E 9–105 A 1). Thus objection (7) is out of place: fever and the unit are never explicitly described as being entitled to be called ill and odd, nor as being always ill and odd. According to the explanation Socrates regards as applicable to fever and the unit, they are rather things that always have the ill and the odd (104 B 8–9 in S4), that compel the thing they occupy always to have the Form of the ill and the odd (104 D 1–3 in S5), and that bring up the Form of the ill and the odd into whatever they enter (105 A 3–4 in S7). These descriptions are indeed true of fever and the unit because, whenever and in whatever they are present, the Forms of the ill and the odd are also present; but they are not themselves ill or odd.[74]

But why, then, did Socrates introduce the Forms of three etc., if he did not intend the subtler *aitiai* to be Forms? I suppose it was to make it easier for Cebes to understand that what brings up the Form of the *F* into whatever it enters does not admit the un-*F*. The truth of this proposition is much more conspicuous

[73] There is a passage where he seems to imply that at least snow and fire among the subtler *aitiai* are entitled to be called by the name of the *F* (cold and hot) for all time, for at 103 E 4–5 in S2 he says, 'something else too [*καὶ ἄλλο τι*], which, though not being that thing [the Form], has its character, whenever it exists'. What verb should be supplied here before 'something else'? There are two possibilities: (*a*) *ἀξιοῦσθαι αὐτοῦ*, i.e. *τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ εἴδους* (something else too . . . is entitled to be called by the name of the *F*) (cf. Burnet, *Phaedo*, note on 103 E 3 (p. 118); B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, i (Oxford, 1953), 462; Tredennick, *Last Days*, 164); and (*b*) 'there is' (there is something else too . . .) (cf. Gallop, *Phaedo*, 56; G. M. A. Grube, *Plato*, Phaedo (Indianapolis, 1977), 54; L. Robin, *Platon, Phédon* [*Phédon*] (Paris, 1926), 79). The fact that 'there is' is to be supplied for the same expression *καὶ ἄλλο τι* at 103 E 9 suggests that (*b*) should be adopted. But even if (*a*) is preferred, it does not follow that Socrates admits that *fever* and *the unit* are entitled to be called ill and odd; it follows only that he admits that *fire* and *snow* are entitled to be called by the name of the *F* (hot and cold). In any case, after S4, when he begins to introduce the definition applicable to fever and the unit, he never describes any of the subtler *aitiai* as being called by the name of the *F*.

[74] Thus the case of a germ, which brings up illness without being itself ill, or the case of a saccharine pill, which brings up sweetness into coffee without being itself sweet, does not constitute any obstacle to the subtler *aitiai*, *pace* Gallop, *Phaedo*, 213; Hartman, 'Predication', 221, 224.

in the case of the Form of three than in the case of the subtler *aitiai*, for the Form of three is itself odd and evidently cannot be even. In having recourse to the Form of three, instead of dealing with the subtler *aitiai* themselves, with the purpose of facilitating Cebes' understanding, Socrates seems to be closely following the *logoi* method, which has recommended escaping the senses as much as possible.

As to (4), I wonder whether Plato is really thinking of fever as a species or a symptom of illness in the *Phaedo*, even if it may be so at *Timaeus* 86 A. In the *Timaeus* fever as a symptom is in question: 'when the body has fallen sick chiefly through excess of fire, it produces continuous heats and fevers' (Cornford's translation); and fever as a symptom is easily regarded as a species of illness. But in the *Phaedo* it is fever as what brings up illness that is in question, and when Socrates treats fever this way as a causal factor, he does not seem to be thinking of it as a symptom or as a species of illness.

As to (6), let us note that 'hypothermia' is a rather new word: Liddell–Scott–Jones does not contain *ὑποθερμία*; there is only *ὑποθερμαίνω*, meaning 'heat a little', and *ὑπόθερμος*, meaning 'somewhat hot'. It is very doubtful whether Plato could have thought of hypothermia as what brings up illness. Even if he recognized a symptom opposite to that of fever, such a symptom is very different from excessively low temperature which works as a causal factor that brings up illness.

As to (5), the unit that is supposed to be the *aitia* for oddness is the unit extra to two equal parts, and when evenness is brought about by a unit, it is clear that this unit is not the extra unit. Odd numbers already have the extra unit, and to add a unit to them is to deprive them of the extra unit.

As to (1) and (2), I do not think that the subtler *aitiai* are degraded to the level of the unsafe wise *aitiai* just because they are mechanical or 'subtler', or because they are only sufficient conditions. In fact, as we have seen several times, the wise *aitiai* are rejected because they are inconsistent with the three laws, i.e. because they are in discord with them, according to our interpretation of 'discord'. This suggests that the Forms of three etc. and the subtler *aitiai* are admitted as *aitiai*, on the other hand, at least because they are consistent with the three laws, i.e. because they are in accord with them. And the three laws do not require that candidates for *aitiai* be non-mechanical or non-subtle or necessary or/and sufficient con-

ditions.[75] It is true that 'subtler' (105 C 2) reminds us of the wise *aitiai* of the natural philosophers, which were called 'subtleties' (101 C 8), but we must be careful to note that the latter *aitiai* were called 'that kind of subtleties' (101 C 8 τοιαύτας), suggesting that the unsafe character of those subtle *aitiai* comes from the fact that they are of a certain kind, i.e. of such a kind as to be in discord with the three laws. On the other hand, the subtler *aitiai* are in fact in accord with the three laws in the following way:

(Law 1) Fire/snow/fever/unit/soul is not cold/hot/healthy/even/dead.

(Law 2) The opposite of fire/snow/fever/unit/soul (if there is one) is not an *aitia* for anything's being hot/cold/ill/odd/alive.

(Law 3) Fire/snow/fever/unit/soul is never an *aitia* for anything's being cold/hot/healthy/even/dead.

Of course, accord or discord with the three laws will not be the sole factor to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to accept some *aitia* or not. When the *Aitia* Proposition was accepted as true (100 C–D), its accord with the Existence Proposition was also taken into account. Likewise, when the subtler answers are accepted as true, their accord with the Existence Proposition, and even with the *Aitia* Proposition, must be taken into account. And Socrates does in fact take account of them, for he says explicitly at 104 D 9–12 that when the Form of three makes something odd, it is the character of the odd (D 10, 12) brought up by the Form of three that brings about its becoming odd.[76] His remark about the Form of three must be applicable to the subtler *aitiai* too: when fire makes something hot, what makes it hot is the Form of the hot brought up by fire. Thus even though Socrates does not answer with the old safe answer when he introduces the subtler answers (105 B 8–C 2), he never neglects it; rather, he grounds the safety of the subtler answers on the safety of the old safe answer. This is our reply to objection (3) above.[77]

Socrates says at 105 B–C that he sees in the subtler *aitiai* ἄλλην . . .

[75] On this point see Sedley, 'Causes', 115–16, 121.

[76] For the role of the character of the odd here see Rowe, *Phaedo*, 257; also Fine, 'Forms', 104–5.

[77] The subtler *aitiai* may meet another objection to the effect that 'There seems nothing analogous . . . to fire and snow that could be called a "reason" for a thing's being large or small' (Gallop, *Phaedo*, 213). But as Sedley has pointed out ('Causes',

ἀσφάλειαν (105 B 8) besides the safest answer, the *Aitia* Proposition. This expression is often translated as 'a different kind of safety', which may suggest that the safety of the subtler *aitiai* is different in kind from the safety of the *Aitia* Proposition, coming from sources different from those of the *Aitia* Proposition. But this translation is incorrect. The exact translation is 'another safety'; although the safety of the subtler *aitiai* is numerically different from that of the *Aitia* Proposition, they may have their sources in common; as a matter of fact, both answers derive their safety from common sources, the three laws and the Existence Proposition.

According to 100 A 3–4, the initial hypothesis is a *logos* judged to be 'strongest', and the Existence Proposition is hypothesized as such a *logos* at 100 B 5–7. The *Aitia* Proposition, on the other hand, is accepted as the 'safest' answer at 100 D 7–9. Now, there is some tendency among interpreters to connect the strength of the Existence Proposition with the safety of the *Aitia* Proposition and to try to explain the one from the other.[78] 'Safest' and 'strongest' are certainly related, but it is necessary for us to see exactly how they are related, for generally speaking, although 'safety' of something comes from relying on something 'strongest', the converse is not necessarily true. Suppose two persons cling to two different ropes attached to the same strong boat, one rope being stout and short and the other long and frail, or to one rope at different points, one person at a point nearer to the boat and the other at a point further away. In this case both of them are safe in any case, being drawn by the same boat; their safety is of the same kind, for if the boat sank they would both be drowned. But their safety is not identical. The person clinging to the stout and short rope or at the point nearer to the boat is certainly safer than the other. Besides, the former may be reliable enough for another person to cling to him and in this sense strong, whereas the latter person will not be regarded as strong, even though he is safe.

The relation of the strong boat to the two persons clinging to it is the same as that of the Existence Proposition and the three laws to the *Aitia* Proposition and the subtler answers. The Existence Proposition and the three laws are the strongest *logoi*, and the *Aitia* Proposition and the subtler answers are admitted because

123), there may be cases in which no *aitia* may be needed beyond safe Formal *aitiai* for something being *F*.

[78] Gallop, *Phaedo*, 179; Rowe, 'Reply', 236.

they are in accord with those strongest *logoi*; their safety is thus of the same kind. But the subtler answers are not as safe as the *Aitia* Proposition; their safety is different from the safety of the *Aitia* Proposition in the following way. First, although the *Aitia* Proposition is directly connected to the Existence Proposition, the subtler answers are connected to the Existence Proposition only through the *Aitia* Proposition, as we have just seen. Second, the *Aitia* Proposition can never be in accord with propositions that do not admit the Existence Proposition, but the subtler answers can be in accord with propositions that do not admit it: even someone who does not admit the existence of Forms can admit that fever is an *aitia* for illness. Third, it is self-evident that Law 1 is satisfied by Forms, for each Form is *F* itself and can never be un-*F*, but it is not so evident that Law 1 is satisfied by the subtler *aitiai*: some of the subtler *aitiai* are not *F* (fever/unit is not ill/odd), although they are not un-*F* and thus satisfy Law 1. Therefore the safety of the subtler answers is not so secure as that of the *Aitia* Proposition; accordingly, they are called 'subtler'. But they are safe enough to help prove that soul is *ἀθάνατος*.

Let us now move to Method B (101 D 1–E 3) and examine its procedures to see whether our interpretation is in accord with the explanation there.

(*e*) *Procedures in 101 D–E*

We have already seen that the hypothesis referred to in Method B1 is supposed to be the *Aitia* Proposition. But when Socrates proceeds in Method B2–6 to explain the method of hypothesis, his explanation is rather general and should be understood in such a way as to be applicable not only to the *Aitia* Proposition but also to the Existence Proposition, or to whatever hypothesis is adopted in any enquiry.

Concerning Method B2 and Method B3, we face the following problems:

(1) How should we understand 'cling to' in Method B2 (101 D 3)? As 'attack' in a sense seemingly here required but very different from that of 'cling to' two lines before (101 D 1), or in some other sense?

(2) In Method B3 Socrates seems to be explaining the method of checking the truth of the hypothesis in question. What sense, then,

can we make of his advice to consider whether the things that have started from the hypothesis are in accord or discord with one another? It cannot be that Socrates is advising us to consider whether they are in accord or discord with the hypothesis itself, because they are what have been put down as true because of their accord with the hypothesis. On the other hand, if what is to be considered is whether they are in accord or in discord among themselves, is this consideration of any help in checking the truth of the hypothesis in question? It is quite possible, and more likely, that some of them which are supposed to be true should in reality be false, creating discord among themselves, than for the hypothesis itself to be false. To call the hypothesis into question because of the discord among things below it seems equal to the jumbling together of which the antilogicians are accused.

How can we solve these problems? It seems impossible to me to solve them as long as we suppose that Method B2 and Method B3 focus on the truth of the hypothesis. But there is something strange about regarding the hypothesis itself as the target here, for if Socrates is presenting a way to check its truth, it follows that while advising his friends to dismiss the challenge against it and not to reply until later (101 D 3–4), he is at the same time teaching them how to meet the challenge (D 4–5). So let us discard this supposition; by discarding it we can find the solution to the problems above.[79]

[79] Blank also discards this supposition ('Instructions', 154). But while I suppose that someone's clinging to the hypothesis in Method B2 constitutes an obstacle to further enquiry described in Method B3, he regards the clinging in Method B2 as a step of joint enquiry, taking '*ἔχεσθαι X* (gen.)' as meaning 'use *X* as a basis [for further research]': according to him, 'he [the questioner] will use it [the hypothesis] as his basis (*εἰ δέ τις αὐτῆς τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἔχοιτο*)' (152), and 'If the questioner uses the hypothesis as his basis, then he will not be questioning the hypothesis itself, but he must be asking a question about the consequences of the hypothesis' (152–3). But it is rather unnatural to take '*ἔχεσθαι X* (gen.)' as meaning 'use *X* as a basis'; if the phrase can be taken in this sense at 101 D 1–2, it is just because it is employed there together with *ἀποκρίναιο* (reply); without such a verb at 101 D 3 it is difficult to take the phrase in this sense. Second, because of his interpretation Blank had to take both *χαίρειν ἐᾷς ἄν* and *οὐκ ἀποκρίναιο* (101 D 3–4) rather artificially, the former as 'putting the hypothesis aside for the moment' (154) and the latter as 'he must take careful thought before answering a question about the consequences of his hypothesis' (154). It is true that '*χαίρειν ἐᾶν* or its equivalents may be used of something which is not totally dismissed, but only put aside temporarily' (154 n. 27), but in all the instances Blank quotes in n. 27 the phrase is employed together with such a phrase as *ἐν τῷ παρόντι*. This suggests that *χαίρειν ἐᾶν* without such a qualification (101 D 3) should be understood in the same way as at 100 D 2, 101 C 8, and 114 E 2, as meaning 'you would dismiss him [or his clinging]'. Neither can

I have pointed out that the method of hypothesis is a method for discovery; Socrates refers to this objective in Method B6 too (101 E 3). Accordingly, when an enquirer hypothesizes a very strong *logos* in Method A2, his choice of it is motivated by the desire to prove the truth of some particular proposition, and by clinging to the safety of the adopted hypothesis he will try to carry out his task (cf. Method B1). He may find at once that his target proposition is true, by seeing its accord with the hypothesis he has hypothesized, or see that some more propositions are needed to connect the target proposition with the initial hypothesis through the relationship of accord. In the latter case, of which the proof of the soul's indestructibility can be an example, much perseverance will be needed in the enquiry, and unless he is careful, he will easily be sidetracked by various questions that may occur to him. These questions can come not only from his opponents, who are eager to attack the hypothesis, but also from his friends (or even from himself), who are eager to see the defence of the hypothesis even if they have not yet achieved the initial target. Besides, too much emphasis on the safety of the hypothesis may make the enquirer neglect other things as shaky, even if they are in accord with the hypothesis and are necessary to carry out the enquiry. As an example of the latter case we can cite the tendency of interpreters to emphasize the safety of the *Aitia* Proposition to such a degree that they neglect the safety of the subtler *aitiai*. This is why Socrates advises his friends to dismiss someone's clinging to the hypothesis: although it is advisable to cling to the *Aitia* Proposition so as not to stumble (100 D 9–E 1), the enquiry is disrupted by clinging to it so tightly as to prevent its progress towards the target.[80] This is my reply to problem (1).

I accept his interpretation of 101 D 5 ff.: 'Since the method is wholly concerned with the derivation of the consequences *ex hypothesi*, 101 D 5 ff. is a digression of a sort, designed to show the proper course to take if the attempt to deduce Q [from the initial hypothesis P] is interrupted (or the deduction of Q is questioned) by someone who either does not understand or does not accept P' (155; cf. 157–8, 160–1). Method B2 and Method B4 suggest in any case that the explanation of the initial hypothesis by means of the method of hypothesis, through a higher hypothesis, is eagerly asked for either by opponents or by friends.

[80] Sedley suggests that 'cling to' or 'adhere to' in 101 D 3 should be taken as representing the kind of adhering that originates from hasty agreement and that Socrates is warning against hasty agreement from an interlocutor that may endanger co-operative dialectic (D. Sedley, 'The Dramatis Personae of Plato's *Phaedo*' ['Personae'], in T. J. Smiley (ed.), *Philosophical Dialogues: Plato, Hume, Wittgenstein* (Oxford, 1995), 3–26 at 16–17). But it seems that if a hypothesis were agreed

As to problem (2), suppose Socrates in Method B3 is not talking about how to check the truth of the hypothesis but about how to ascertain the truth of the target proposition. For this purpose it is a good method to examine whether the things that have started from the hypothesis are in accord or discord (consistent or inconsistent) with one another. To try to ascertain the truth of the target proposition only by confirming its accord with the initial hypothesis would make the method rather unreliable, for the choice of the hypothesis may have been governed by the wish to reach the target proposition smoothly; in this case simple accord with the hypothesis is a rather shaky ground for regarding the target proposition as true. But if it is found that all the things that have started from the hypothesis, including the target proposition, are in accord with one another, the target proposition will be regarded as true with high probability.

For example, in the final proof of the soul's indestructibility Socrates presents various propositions in S1–10 above and in S11–13 below. Some of them may have the status of hypotheses for further search because of their strength (e.g. the *Aitia* Proposition), and others not, but anyway they are all things which have started from the initial hypothesis (the Existence Proposition), including the target proposition that the soul is indestructible. If any discord were found among them, the proof would be regarded as a failure, even though the target proposition has been reached; but the fact is that there is no discord found among them, as we shall see, and the proof is therefore regarded as successful.

After accomplishing the proof Socrates advises his friends to examine the first hypotheses more clearly (107 B 5–6 in Method C1). This is in agreement with Method B4, with the sole difference lying in the number of hypotheses to be examined. Also, he says that, if one has scrutinized them satisfactorily, one will follow the argument to the furthest possible point to which man can follow (107 B 6–8 in Method C2), which is also in agreement with 'until you came to something satisfactory' in Method B5. As to the difference of the number of hypotheses, we can suppose that though

to (even if it is a hasty agreement), the enquirer would not 'dismiss' or 'renounce' (101 D 3 *χαίρειν ἐάσῃς*) the interlocutor or his agreement but welcome the agreement in order to move to the next stage of his enquiry, entrusting the interlocutor with the task of considering whether the agreement was hasty or not (cf. method C1); the fact that the enquirer must give an account of the hypothesis because of the very adherence to it (Method B2–4) suggests that he is asked, by whoever it is, to defend the hypothesis or to ground it on a firmer basis.

Socrates' basic position is that every first hypothesis should be more clearly examined, in Method B he refers to the examination of one particular hypothesis, because the hypothesis from which other things have started is there highlighted.

Through our attempt to clarify procedures of Method B we could thus clarify the procedures of Method C too. As to the first hypotheses in Method C1, we have found so far that the Existence Proposition, the *Aitia* Proposition, and the three laws can be counted among them. But none of them is specifically related to the final proof, to which 'the argument' at 107 B 7 (Method C2) refers. This suggests that there may be one or more further hypotheses to be counted among the first hypotheses, which are especially related to the final proof.

There are controversies about how to evaluate the final proof, but controversies may have arisen hitherto just because we have not examined clearly enough the first hypotheses essentially concerned in the proof. In fact Socrates' advice to examine the first hypotheses is taken to be addressed not only to his friends but also to us readers.[81] Thus, to try to find the first hypotheses related to the proof may help us understand it better.

3. The proof of the soul's indestructibility

As has often been remarked, it is not yet proved in S10 that the soul is indestructible (ἀνώλεθρος), even though it has been ascertained that it is ἀθάνατος. If Plato considered the proof to have been completed at this stage, it would follow that the final proof is fallacious. The proof runs as follows:

(S10) Soul is an *aitia* for something that it occupies being alive, and as such a subtler *aitia* it never admits death; it is ἀ-dead (ἀθάνατος) (105 C 9–E 9).
(S11) If whatever is ἀθάνατος is indestructible, soul is indestructible (105 E 10–106 D 1).
(S12) But whatever is ἀθάνατος is indestructible (106 D 2–9).
(S13) Therefore soul is indestructible (106 E 1–107 A 1).

[81] According to the suggestion of Angela Hobbs, which Sedley quotes, 'the extension of this advice to the entire group represents a philosophical agenda which Socrates is leaving Plato and others to pursue' (Sedley, 'Personae', 18 n. 18); I suppose 'others' should include every reader of the *Phaedo*, including us today.

I am going to deal with Keyt's interpretation here because it argues most lucidly for the fallacy of the proof. According to it, Socrates is committing the fallacy of equivocation ((1)–(3) below) and a form of the fallacy of composition ((4) below).[82]

(1) *ἀθάνατος* means simply 'alive' in S10.

(2) S12 is true only if *ἀθάνατος* means not 'alive', but 'immortal'.[83]

(3) That *ἀθάνατος* means 'immortal' in S12 is clear from the phrase *τό γε ἀθάνατον ἀΐδιον ὄν* at 106 D 3.

(4) 'What follows is not that the soul is indestructible but that the ensouled body, the entire man, is indestructible. What we have so far is the following argument: whatever has soul is alive; whatever is alive is *ἀθάνατος*; whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible; therefore, whatever has soul is indestructible. In order to get the conclusion that the soul, and not the ensouled body, is immortal and indestructible, Plato must shift the predicates "indestructible" and "immortal" from that which has soul to soul itself.'

But I regard (1)–(4) as unacceptable. First, as to (3), it is not Socrates but Cebes who uses the phrase in question at 106 D 3, and even if Cebes understood *ἀθάνατον* and *ἀΐδιον* as equivalent, it does not follow that Socrates used *ἀθάνατος* in the sense of *ἀΐδιος* in his remark at 106 D 5–7. Rather, Socrates in S12 has made a distinction between *ἀθάνατος* and 'indestructible' (*ἀνώλεθρος*), the equivalent of *ἀΐδιος*, as is clear from the following facts.[84] (*a*) If he had been unclear about the distinction, he would not have posed a new question as to whether the *ἀθάνατον* is destructible just as the *ἀν*-even, the *ἀν*-hot, and the *ἀ*-cold are, or indestructible (105 E 10–106 C 8). (*b*) The condition 'whenever it exists'

[82] Keyt, 'Fallacies', 170–1; cf. Reeve, 'Reply', 205. In (1) I have changed '*ζωή*' (noun) of Keyt into 'alive' (adjective). (4) is a quotation from Keyt. As to contentions similar to Keyt's, see Strato of Lampsacus, frr. 123 a, g, h, m, n, 124 Wehrli (cf. Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 195–7), and also a summary of interpretations by Erbse, 'Anmerkungen', 98–100.

[83] Let me note that Keyt distinguishes between *ἀθάνατος* and 'immortal': he says, 'At the beginning of the argument [in S10] *ἀθάνατος* is the opposite of *θάνατος*, but at the end [in S12] it is the opposite of *θνητός* (compare 105 E 2–3 with 106 E 5–6)' ('Fallacies', 170). In order not to incur any unnecessary confusion, I have abstained in this paper from using 'immortal', which is often employed as the translation of *ἀθάνατος*, and employ '*ἀ*-dead' for *ἀθάνατος* (not admitting death) (cf. n. 59 above).

[84] For (*a*) see Gallop, *Phaedo*, 216–17; for (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) Frede, 'Proof', 30–1; for (*a*), (*b*), and (*d*) Y. Kanayama, 'The Final Proof of the Immortality of the Soul in the *Phaedo*' ['Proof'] (in Japanese), *Methodos: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy*, 11 (1979), 16–24 at 17–18.

(103 E 5) or 'while being what it is' (103 D 5, 12, 104 C 3), which Socrates imposes for something being essentially *F* or for something not admitting the un-*F*, suggests that he is aware that although the soul is *ἀθάνατος* (*ἀ*-dead) whenever it exists, it may happen that it stops existing and perishes. (*c*) He repeats three times that the validity of the last proof depends on the question whether the *ἀθάνατον* is also indestructible (106 B 2, C 9–10, E 1). (*d*) Although he does not add *καί* (also) before 'indestructible' when asking questions about the *ἀν*-even etc. (105 E 10–106 A 1, A 3, 8), he meticulously adds *καί* before 'indestructible', indeed five times, when asking questions about the *ἀθάνατον* (106 B 2, C 10, D 1, E 1, 2); it is as if he feared lest *ἀθάνατος* and 'indestructible' should be confounded. Thus we should suppose that there is no confusion between *ἀθάνατος* and 'indestructible' (or *ἀΐδιος*) on Socrates' part. Far from being misled by the equivocation of *ἀθάνατος* (contrary to (2)), Socrates has accepted S12 for some independent reason.

As to (1), Keyt explains his reason for accepting it as follows:[85]

> Plato now offers a definition: that which does not admit *θάνατος* is called *ἀθάνατος* (105 E 2–3). What does *ἀθάνατος* mean here? Plato tells us that *θάνατος* and *ἀθάνατος* are related as even to uneven, just to unjust, cultured to uncultured (105 D 13–E 3). What is so related to death? Obviously, life. So here *ἀθάνατος* means simply *ζωή*.

But first, to translate *ἀνάρτιον*, *ἄδικον*, and *ἄμουσον* in 105 D 15 and E 1 as 'uneven', 'unjust', and 'uncultured' is misleading, for these translations suggest the opposite of 'even', 'just', and 'cultured', but *ἀνάρτιον*, *ἄδικον*, and *ἄμουσον* are simply terms given to 'what does not admit the Form of the even/the just/the cultured' (105 D 13–E 1). Thus, to follow the phraseology of this paper, we should translate them as '*ἀν*-even', '*ἀ*-just', and '*ἀ*-cultured'. And what is (e.g.) *ἀν*-even is not necessarily uneven (i.e. odd): for example, the unit never admits the Form of the even and thus is *ἀν*-even (cf. S7 and S9), but it is not odd since it is not a number. It is not true that *ἀθάνατος* means simply 'alive'.

This leads to our objection to (4): if *ἀθάνατος* meant simply 'alive', we could almost tautologically say 'whatever is alive is *ἀθάνατος*'. But *ἀθάνατος* means 'not admitting death'. Therefore, it is not self-evident that whatever is alive is *ἀθάνατος*. For although soul is alive

[85] Keyt, 'Fallacies', 170.

and never admits death (is ἀθάνατος), it is doubtful whether an ensouled body, which is alive, is also ἀθάνατος, contrary to (4).

But it may be claimed that just as soul is alive and does not admit death (is ἀθάνατος) whenever it exists, the ensouled body is alive and does not admit death (is ἀθάνατος) *whenever it exists as an ensouled body*; it follows therefore that even if ἀθάνατος does not mean 'alive', whatever is alive (including the ensouled body) is anyway ἀθάνατος, as long as it exists as what is alive. But when Socrates introduces the idiom of 'ἀ-*G*', such as ἀνάρτιος (ἀν-even), to mean 'having no part in the *G*' or 'not admitting the *G*' (104 E), is he thinking of applying it to such things as ensouled bodies, which are occupied by what brings up the *F* into whatever it enters? First, when he begins to employ the idiom of 'ἀ-*G*' in S6, he is introducing it to apply to what brings up the *F* and occupies other things (105 A 2–5). Second and decisively, just after the first introduction of the expression 'not admit the *G*', meaning 'either withdraw or perish when the *G* approaches it' (102 D 8–E 2), Plato suddenly makes some unnamed person intrude into the conversation and through answering him confirms that the possibility of 'not admitting the *G*' is not open to things that have opposite Forms and are called by opposite names (103 A–C): these things admit the *G* and come to be *G* from un-*G*, when the *G* approaches. And it is clear from 71 D–72 A (the Cyclical Argument) that the ensouled body is one of those things that admit the *G* and come to be *G* from un-*G* when the *G* approaches: ensouled bodies, which are alive, come to be dead bodies when death approaches. Thus the ensouled body can never be ἀθάνατος, contrary to (4).

It is true that soul is a subtler *aitia* and is not a Form, and it thus belongs to the group of things that have opposite Forms and are called by opposite names; in this respect soul belongs to the same category as the ensouled body. But Socrates has concluded through the argument of S1–10 that soul is different from the ensouled body in being one of those things to which 'not admitting the *G*' is granted, with the result that it either withdraws or perishes when the *G* approaches (S10). Therefore, *pace* Keyt, there is neither the fallacy of equivocation nor a form of the fallacy of composition in the final proof.

How, then, should we understand the proof? Various attempts have been made to understand 'whatever is ἀθάνατος is indestructible' (S12) in a way that does not incur the fallacy of equivocation.

One such attempt is that of D. Frede.[86] As we have seen, Cebes' statement at 106 D 2–4 should not be adopted as a clue. Frede seeks a clue in Socrates' statement that 'it would be admitted by everybody that God, the Form of life itself, and anything else *ἀθάνατον* there may be, could never perish' (106 D 5–7). Seeking 'something which God, the form of life and the unnamed "etceteras" have in common', she points out that they are all essentially alive, and reconstructs the proof as follows:[87]

> whatever is alive, whether it possesses life as an essential property or not, can only pass out of existence by accepting death, by dying. . . . So it is quite inconceivable that to the question 'When did N.N. die?' one would receive the answer, 'He did not die, he simply went out of existence'.
>
> For if destruction for a living being is its loss of life (death), then deathlessness implies indestructibility. Thus the inference is justified that whatever possesses life as essential attribute cannot be destructible; for if it cannot admit death it cannot go out of existence at all, and must therefore be indestructible as well.

But I wonder whether it would be possible to persuade stubborn Cebes by Frede's explanation: he might repeat 'the argument seems to me to remain where it was' (86 E 6–7), for he might ask:

> Can whatever is alive pass out of existence only by accepting death? Is it inconceivable that to the question 'When did N.N. die?' one would receive the answer, 'He did not die, he simply went out of existence'? Is destruction for a living being its loss of life (death)?

Socrates clearly distinguishes *ἀνώλεθρος* (indestructible) and *ἀθάνατος*; thus he must be distinguishing 'passing out of existence (destruction/perishing)' and 'dying'. So we cannot affirm, as if it is self-evident, that destruction for a living being is its loss of life (death). What is death? Socrates himself says, 'Nobody knows death' (*Ap.* 29 A 6–7). So let us start from the state of ignorance about death, and suppose, for example, according to such people as Callicles who despise philosophers, that to exist without physical pleasures is to be dead, and to be alive is to live in pursuit of physical pleasures (*Phaedo* 64 B, *Gorg.* 483 B). Then should we say that someone in physical pleasures or in pursuit of them, who is alive for Callicles, can pass out of existence only by accepting death in his sense, i.e. leaving the state, or the pursuit, of physical pleasures,

[86] Frede, 'Proof', 31–2. [87] Ibid.

or that destruction for someone enjoying physical pleasures is his loss of them? It is conceivable that one might answer the question 'When did Callicles leave the state he regards as living?' by saying 'He never left that state; he simply went out of existence.'

Because we are ignorant of death, we are ignorant of its opposite, life, too. In this respect I regard it as noteworthy that Socrates should refer to the Form of life (106 D 5–6), and the following comment by Frede is very appropriate:[88] 'If this [106 D 5–7] is not a rather pointless appeal, there must be something which God, the form of life and the unnamed "etceteras" have in common.' It seems that through the remark at 106 D 5–7 Socrates is implicitly advising us to try to find what the Form of life is. And discovery of the Form of life must certainly help us to know why whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible, since what is *ἀθάνατος* is what never admits death because it brings up life (the Form of life) into whatever it enters (105 D–E); the question why whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible boils down to the question why what always brings up life is indestructible.[89]

At the end of Section 2 we asked what can be the first hypotheses specifically related to the final proof of the soul's indestructibility, which Socrates advises his friends and us to examine more clearly. We have an answer now: 'the thing that brings up the *F* into whatever it enters never admits the un-*F*' in S7, 'soul is an *aitia* for something that it occupies being alive' in S10, and 'whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible' in S12 are all supposed to be the first hypotheses, for they are precisely propositions which Socrates employs for the final proof, and it is the last hypothesis above all that we have to examine more clearly, in order to be fully persuaded of the final proof.

Even after the final proof Simmias has some residual doubts (107 A–B),[90] but Socrates approves of them, recommending him

[88] Ibid. 31.

[89] Kanayama, 'Proof', 18.

[90] Sedley, 'Personae', 17, 19, regards the difference between Socrates' conviction and Simmias' residual doubts at the end of the proof as partly due to the difference of their methodologies, and takes Simmias' doubts to be signs of his misology. But Simmias, who could follow Socrates' explanation of the method of hypothesis and affirms that he will not do the same thing as antilogicians (102 A 2), is no longer the same Simmias as before, when he was somewhat inclined towards misology. Socrates himself is treating Simmias as capable of employing the method of hypothesis, saying, 'If you have scrutinized the first hypotheses satisfactorily, you will [*not* "could"] follow the argument to the furthest possible point to which man can follow' (107 B 6–8).

(and us) to examine the first hypotheses more clearly even if they are credible to him (to us) (107 B 4–6). His recommendation does not imply that the first hypotheses are unsound, for he is sure that their examination will lead us to the furthest possible point (107 B 6–8). He recommends us to examine them more clearly because 'whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible' needs further enquiry for us to be fully persuaded of its truth and of the soul's indestructibility.

But why did Socrates leave unexamined this crucial proposition for the final proof? Or to put it another way, why did Plato not make Socrates examine it in the *Phaedo* itself? Given the firm conviction of the soul's indestructibility which Plato attributes to Socrates, it is unlikely that he should have supposed that Socrates had not yet found the answer. It seems rather that Plato felt it necessary to depict Socrates advising his friends, including Plato himself and his readers today, to examine the question on their own. But why did Plato feel it necessary to do so? The task left by Socrates to us is to become convinced on our own of the soul's indestructibility. In this respect Socrates' remark after long meditation, into which he fell when he was challenged by Cebes to show that the soul is altogether *ἀθάνατος* and indestructible (cf. 88 B 5–6, 95 B 9–C 1), is interesting:

> It's no light matter that you are searching for, Cebes. For we must deal thoroughly with the whole question of the *aitia* for coming-to-be and destruction. So I shall relate my experiences on these matters, if you like. And then, if anything I say appears helpful to you, you will use it for persuasion on the matters you raise. (95 E 8–96 A 4)

Socrates' advice to Cebes is sometimes interpreted as recommending him to use Socrates' experiences in order to persuade Socrates of Cebes' own view.[91] But this seems mistaken, for it is not Socrates but Cebes who is to be persuaded. When Simmias and Cebes raise doubts about the indestructibility of the soul, neither of them intends to convince Socrates that he is mistaken. They are rather looking forward to being persuaded of truth (91 C 8, 92 A 2–3), by being refuted by Socrates (95 A 7–B 4): Socrates is for them an investigator possessing the skill of *logoi* that helps them not to become misologists (90 B 6–9, D), and the task of persuading belongs to Socrates (cf. 84 D 9–E 2, 87 A 8, E 6, 91 B 2–3, 92 E 1, 107 A 3, A 8–B

[91] Cf. Rowe's translation in his *Phaedo*, 230; the translation of Bluck, *Phaedo*, 106, may be to the same effect.

3, B 5–6). This means that in 95 E–96 A Socrates is advising Cebes to make use of Socrates' own experiences in order to be persuaded of the soul's indestructibility; his advice here is taken further as advice addressed by Plato to us to learn from Socrates' experiences. So let us follow his advice; we may be able then to find our answer, or at least some clue, both to the question why whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible and to the question why Socrates has left this question to us.

4. The proverbial phrase 'second voyage'

I believe the most important lesson to be learnt from Socrates' experiences is the view that the good is the real *aitia*; actually this must be what Plato learnt from Socrates' life in pursuit of the good. We meet here the problem of whether Socrates has abandoned the search for the good as *aitia* in his so-called second voyage (99 C ff.).

In pursuing the whole question of the *aitia* for coming-to-be and destruction (95 E 9) Socrates has formed a firm conviction that the real *aitia* to be sought is the good (97 C–99 C). This strong conviction and Plato's later development of both the supreme status of the Form of the Good in the *Republic* and teleological cosmology in the *Timaeus* have made some interpreters try to find some clues to Plato's idea about the good in Socrates' second voyage. But as it is, there is no explicit reference to the good as *aitia* in 99 D ff., and despite their attempts to find some hints in the cursory reference to the Form of the Good (100 B 6), or in the role of Forms as things to be striven for by particulars (75 A–B), hitherto they have not succeeded.[92]

Other interpreters, on the other hand, have supposed that Socrates is expressing in 99 C 8–D 2 his decision to do without the good as *aitia*; they have seen evidence for this partly in his claim of deprivation of such *aitia* (99 C 8) and partly in his presentation of another kind of *aitiai*, Formal *aitiai* (99 D ff.).[93] As to the first ground, it has been pointed out that the claim of deprivation expressed in the aorist does not exclude the hope for a new venture for the good.[94] However, in any event the presentation of Formal

[92] On this point see e.g. Taylor, 'Forms', 47, 53–4; Gallop, *Phaedo*, 191; Rowe, 'Explanation', 55, 68–9; González, *Dialectic*, 351 n. 3.

[93] e.g. Robinson, *Dialectic*, 142–3; Vlastos, 'Reasons', 297–8 n. 15.

[94] Cf. J. T. Bedu-Addo, 'On the Alleged Abandonment of the Good in the *Phaedo*',

aitiai looks decisive, for 'second voyage' seems to mean 'second-best course', and the second-best course 'with a view to the seeking of the *aitia*' (99 C 9–D 1) is supposed to be the second-best attempt of explaining *aitiai* by Forms, rather than the second-best course of searching for the good as *aitia*;[95] in fact, Socrates was eager to find the *aitia* in general at the initial stage of his enquiry (95 E–96 A),[96] and this desire is supposed to be well satisfied by the discovery of Formal *aitiai*.

Now, 'second voyage' (δεύτερος πλοῦς) is a proverbial phrase. But in what context was it employed? It was used in two ways; one use is illustrated by the following quotations from Eustathius:[97]

> Note that the voyage explained by Homer in the way it was told [i.e. the fair voyage procured by Athene for Telemachus at the end of *Odyssey* book 2] would be called a first voyage [πρῶτος . . . πλοῦς], if the voyage is called a second voyage [δεύτερος πλοῦς] when someone takes to the oars in the absence of a fair wind, according to Pausanias.
>
> You must know that the voyage of those who take to the oars is called a second voyage according to the proverb, on the ground that sailing with a fair wind is the first [πρώτου] [on *Il.* 7. 4–7].

These quotations seem to support the view that 'second voyage' means 'second-best course': it is second in rank relatively to the first voyage, owing to the labour involved. This reading seems to be further supported by Plato (*Polit.* 300 C; *Phileb.* 19 C) and Aristotle (*NE* 2, 1109^{a}30–^{b}1; *Pol.* 3, 1284^{b}3–20).[98]

But there is another reading, which is adopted in the scholia on the *Phaedo*:[99]

> Since those who failed in the prior voyage [πρότερος πλοῦς] prepare the

Apeiron, 13 (1979), 104–14 at 105, 112 n. 11; D. Wiggins, 'Teleology and the Good in Plato's *Phaedo*', *OSAP* 4 (1986), 1–18 at 3.

[95] This interpretation is adopted by many interpreters, such as L. E. Rose, 'The *Deuteros Plous* in Plato's *Phaedo*' ['Plous'], *Monist*, 50 (1966), 464–73 at 466–7; Vlastos, 'Reasons', 297–8 and n. 15.

[96] Fine, 'Forms', 92–3

[97] The first quotation is from *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, ed. G. Stallbaum, i (Leipzig, 1825; repr. Hildesheim, 1970), 107, and the second from *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, ed. G. Stallbaum, ii (Leipzig, 1830; repr. Hildesheim, 1970), 386. See also Menander fr. 205 Koerte.

[98] Cf. J. A. Stewart, *Notes on the* Nicomachean Ethics *of Aristotle*, i (Oxford, 1892; repr. New York, 1973), 220; Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 137; Tanaka, *Platon*, 274.

[99] Cf. W. C. Greene, *Scholia Platonica* (Ann Arbor, 1981), 14.

second safely, the proverb 'second voyage' is said about those who do something safely.

According to this reading, 'second' means only 'second in time', and there is no implication of the inferiority of the second voyage relatively to the prior one; it rather suggests that the second voyage is better than the prior in being a safer voyage.

Now, in both uses the first voyage[100] is clearly a voyage helped by a fair wind, while the second is a voyage in which sailors rely on rowing. It also seems clear that what corresponds to the method of rowing in Socrates' second voyage is the *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis, both of which are similar to the rowing in being laborious and allowing safe access to the destination (cf. 100 D 8, E 1, 101 D 2, 105 B 7, C 1 on the safety of hypotheses).

I take it, therefore, that for Socrates the difference between the first voyage and the second does not lie in their destinations but in their methods. However, some interpreters who take the second voyage to be a second-best course claim that the destination of the second voyage is different from the initial destination, being a second-best one. For example, Murphy says: 'we must not think of both voyages steering for the same port; it is rather that the merchant, having failed to reach a distant and dangerous market, sends his ship to an easier destination even if it will prove less profitable'.[101] But throughout extant literature the proverbial phrase never implies a change of destination. In the passages of Homer, on which Eustathius comments, the destinations of the voyage by rowing and the voyage by a fair wind are the same: in *Il.* 7. 4–7 and *Od.* 2. 434 sailors, who are engaged in or ready for the laborious work of rowing, are unexpectedly helped by a fair wind sent by a deity, to arrive at the same destination. In *Politicus* and *Philebus* too, the destinations of the first and the second voyages are the same: in *Politicus* both the prescription of what is right with perfect accuracy (the first voyage, 294 A–B) and the prohibition of any act contravening general laws (the second voyage, 300 C) aim at the realization of good government (293 D); in *Philebus* both to know

[100] It may not be an accident that the voyage contrasted with the voyage second in rank is called 'the first voyage' (*πρῶτος πλοῦς*; cf. Eustathius), while the voyage contrasted with the voyage second in time is called 'the prior voyage' (*πρότερος πλοῦς*; cf. the scholia on the *Phaedo*); but I shall henceforth employ 'the first voyage' to refer to both types of voyage contrasted with the second voyage.

[101] Murphy, *Interpretation*, 146.

everything (the first, 19 C 2) and not to delude oneself (the second, C 3) aim at becoming a worthy person (B 8). Moreover, in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* book 2, both hitting the mean extremely accurately[102] (the first, 1109[a]34) and taking the least of the evils (the second, [a]35) aim at reaching the mean ([a]25, 30); in *Politics* book 3 both the legislator's ordering his state such that ostracism is never required (the first, 1284[b]17–19) and the attempt to correct an evil by such measures as ostracism when the need arises (the second, [b]19–20) aim at the common good ([b]6).

Besides, the simple change of destination into an easier one does not make a voyage any safer: 'For trade they . . . usually relied on sails for propulsion, which allowed more space for the storage of cargo, but also meant that they were at the mercy of the weather'.[103] In Murphy's view the ship used for the second voyage is a merchant ship; but merchant ships relying on sails for propulsion are 'at the mercy of the weather', and the nearness of the destination will not help at all. Whether the destination is near or not, reliance on such ships is contradictory both to the safe preparation in the scholia on the *Phaedo* and to the ability to take to the oars in Eustathius, whereas if the ship is well prepared, the distance of the destination will not matter at all.

How well, then, should the ship for the second voyage be equipped and what kind of ship is it? In this context Socrates' remark at 99 C 8–D 2 is often compared with Simmias' remark at 85 C 7–D 4.[104] According to Socrates:

> But since I was deprived of this [i.e. the good as *aitia*] and could neither discover [*εὑρεῖν*] it for myself nor learn [*μαθεῖν*] it from anyone else, do you wish me to give you a display of how I have undertaken the second voyage with a view to the seeking of the *aitia*? (99 C 8–D 2)

According to Simmias:

> In fact, on these questions [i.e. such questions as that of the soul's inde-

[102] I read *ἄκρως* together with *τυχεῖν*. Cf. R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif, *Aristote: L'Éthique à Nicomaque*, ii, 2nd edn. (Paris and Louvain, 1970), 166.

[103] P. de Souza on ships, in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1996), 1400.

[104] e.g. Robin, *Phédon*, p. xlviii n. 2; N. Gulley, 'Ethical Analysis in Plato's Earlier Dialogues', *CQ* NS 2 (1952), 74–82 at 78–9; Verdenius, 'Notes', 220; P. Huby, '*Phaedo* 99d–102a', *Phronesis*, 4 (1959), 12–14 at 13; C. L. Stough, 'Forms and Explanation in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis*, 21 (1976), 1–30 at 14 n. 18; K. M. W. Shipton, 'A Good Second-best: *Phaedo* 99b ff.' ['Second-best'], *Phronesis*, 24 (1979), 33–53 at 35 ff.; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 127; Kahn, *Plato*, 314; González, *Dialectic*, 195.

structibility] one must achieve one of these things: to learn [μαθεῖν] or to discover [εὑρεῖν] how they are; or else, if that is impossible, then seize the best and most irrefutable of human *logoi*, and take it as a raft on which to accomplish the dangerous voyage of life, unless one could travel more safely and less dangerously on a securer conveyance, which is some divine *logos*. (85 C 7–D 4)

From this correspondence some interpreters have concluded that the first voyage is the ideal of complete certainty either by learning from another or by discovering for oneself, or that it is safe travelling on a securer conveyance of divine *logos*, whereas the second voyage is a voyage using the best of human *logoi* as a raft. They suppose that Socrates' *logoi* in his new methodology correspond to Simmias' raft of the best human *logos*. Some interpreters further suppose that the securer conveyance of divine *logos* represents divine inspiration that allows a direct approach to knowledge, and that it is contrasted with humanly possible approximation by the method of provisional (hypothetical) premisses.[105] It has sometimes also been argued that it is because of the possession of body that the human search in this life remains second best (cf. 66 B).[106]

I accept that when Socrates referred to his second voyage, he had Simmias' remark in mind, and that the learning at 99 C 9 can include learning helped by divine inspiration: the first voyage was a voyage helped by a fair wind, and as we have seen, a fair wind is sent by some deity in Homer, *Il.* 7. 4–7 and *Od.* 2. 434. But I doubt whether Socrates regarded divine inspiration or learning from another as better than the laborious approach by his new methodology. I think Sedley is right in pointing out that we should see in Simmias' suggestion at 85 C 1–3—that his opinion may well be the same as Socrates'—Plato's invitation to make the comparison of the methodologies of Simmias and Socrates, which are in fact different.[107]

One of the differences is, according to Sedley, that even a divine account like that of the Delphic oracle, which was certainly safe for Simmias (85 D 2–4), was for Socrates something to be tested before it could be believed (*Ap.* 21 B–C). In fact divine *logos* is treacherous for Socrates, whether it is an oracle or divine inspiration, as long as it lacks further testing and search: although it makes poets say many

[105] Robinson, *Dialectic*, 108, 145; Dorter, *Phaedo*, 127; Shipton, 'Second-best', 40.

[106] Cf. Shipton, 'Second-best', 34–5.

[107] Sedley, 'Personae', 19–20.

beautiful things, it does not make them any wiser, making them instead entertain false opinions about their wisdom (*Ap.* 22 B–C); and true opinions of such famous statesmen as Themistocles are only the product of divine inspiration (*Meno* 99 B–100 B), being of little value unless bound by calculation of *aitia* so that they will not run away from one's mind (97 D–98 A).[108] We can see an example of such fugitive true opinions in Anaxagoras; his insight into the role of Intellect ran away and did not stay long with him, which suggests that it was nothing but a true opinion divinely inspired and needed to be bound by calculation of *aitia*. The new methodology in the *Phaedo*, on the other hand, is supposed to be the very method that contributes to the binding of true opinions by calculation of *aitia*; the method of hypothesis was actually employed to enquire into *aitiai* (*Phaedo* 99 D–100 A).

Even though Simmias regards the best of human *logoi* as a raft, for Socrates his new methodology is never like a raft. Rafts are dangerous (cf. 85 D 1 *κινδυνεύοντα*) indeed, as is clear from the raft of Odysseus: even though Calypso sent a fair wind that was warm and kindly, his life was endangered (*Od.* 5. 268, 313–18). It may be claimed that Socrates' raft is much stouter than Odysseus', and that this is why Socrates could confidently embark on the second voyage, on his own raft of the new methodology.[109] But stout or not, rafts *are* dangerous. Odysseus' so-called raft (*σχεδία*, sc. *ναῦς*, literally 'improvised boat') does not seem to have been a raft but a boat edge-joined by mortises and tenons.[110] It was stouter than any stout raft, but even so it was a *σχεδία*, an improvised boat, and was therefore dangerous, as is clear from his shipwreck. An interesting thing about Odysseus' story is that because he employed an improvised boat, he had to rely for safety on a fair wind sent by Calypso (the method of the first voyage), and that this help was not reliable enough just because of the wind from another god (Poseidon).

The ship for the second voyage is not an improvised boat but a ship safely prepared with equipment for rowing and manpower, as the passages of Eustathius suggest. *Nicomachean Ethics* 2, 1109^{a}30–5, where Aristotle employs the phrase 'second voyage' and refers

[108] The final pages of the *Meno* were suggested to me by Professor Sedley.

[109] Cf. Robinson, *Dialectic*, 145.

[110] Cf. L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (1971; repr. Baltimore and London, 1995), 217–19.

to Odysseus' advice to his pilot, 'Hold the ship out beyond that surf and spray' (*Od.* 12. 219–20), is instructive in this respect. For the ship of Odysseus was a trim vessel equipped with sails, oars, and manpower (*Od.* 12. 166–72), and it is clear that when Aristotle employed the phrase 'second voyage', he was thinking of a ship well prepared for rowing.[111]

Why is Simmias so pessimistic about human *logoi* that he regards the best and most irrefutable of them as only a raft, or rather an improvised boat (85 D 1 *σχεδίας*), on which to accomplish the dangerous voyage of life? The adjective 'irrefutable' (85 C 9–D 1 *δυσεξελεγκτότατον*) and the verb from which the adjective is derived (85 C 5 *ἐλέγχειν*) suggest that he is thinking of the method of elenchus as the way to procure *logoi* on which to accomplish the voyage of life; he must have been well acquainted with this method, which the historical Socrates used to employ, through witnessing Socrates' activity. But the Socratic elenchus consists in refuting interlocutors and making them aware of their human limitations. Besides, it cannot start unless interlocutors express their opinions; this means that it does not serve as a systematic method of enquiry conducted on the enquirer's own initiative. And finally, even if the enquirer has come to regard some *logos* as trustworthy by finding it always unrefuted, this does not guarantee that the *logos* will continue to be unrefuted in the future. Simmias' emphasis on human incapacity and pessimism concerning discovery are supposed to come from these features of the method of elenchus. The *logoi* method or, more specifically, the method of hypothesis, on the other hand, is a method of discovery, as *ἀνευρήσειν* (100 B 8) and *εὑρεῖν* (101 E 3) suggest. It is also a method comparable to a trim ship equipped for rowing, in that it employs the strongest and safest hypothesis on each occasion. Of course, the possession of the body may prevent complete attainment of knowledge in this world, but the soul is imperishable, and the attainment of knowledge will be allowed to a soul which has painstakingly employed the new methodology and reached the stage where further enquiry is no longer necessary (cf. 107 A–B), once it has been freed from the body, as Socrates hopes.

[111] At the same time Aristotle mistakenly supposes that Odysseus' advice goes back to Calypso, not to Circe, who is its true origin (*Od.* 12. 108–9); Calypso's advice is different (5. 277). His mistake is thought to be due to the resemblance of circumstances surrounding Odysseus' departure: in both cases he leaves a goddess to embark on a dangerous voyage and is given by each goddess both advice and the help of a fair wind.

Since Heindorf the conjunction ἤ (85 D 3) in manuscripts before λόγου θείου τινός has been deleted, on the grounds that although the context requires the introduction of an explanation here ('in other words'), it is too harsh to make ἤ play such a role. But it may be unnecessary to delete it, if we take it as a word introducing an alternative, supposing that Plato is here making Simmias vaguely refer to two alternatives, some securer method (βεβαιοτέρου ὀχήματος), which Socrates is later to introduce as the method of hypothesis, and divine inspiration (λόγου θείου τινός). Of course, at this stage Simmias cannot know anything certain about the new methodology, either from μαθεῖν or from εὑρεῖν (85 C 7–8), but it seems that he has hit upon it thanks to his ideal method, divine inspiration.

A fair wind that helps the first voyage is sent by deities; also in the above-mentioned passages in Plato's *Politicus* and *Philebus* and in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* the first voyage is something divine beyond the reach of humankind, while the second is some human course of action in search of the same target. For Socrates, then, who strictly distinguishes between divine wisdom and human opinion (*Ap.* 23 A–B), it must certainly be illegitimate for mortals to hope for the first voyage; and even if he happens to receive some divine revelation as a fair wind for the first voyage, he will stick to his second voyage and try laboriously to check its truth, just as he did concerning the Delphic oracle (*Ap.* 21–3).

If there is any divine help for Socrates, it must consist in being stimulated into reflection, just as he was stimulated by the oracle, and as Athenians were stimulated by Apollo's 'stinging fly', Socrates (although they were too dull to be roused to investigation) (*Ap.* 30 E), and as he was encouraged to engage in philosophy by his dreams (*Phaedo* 60 E–61 A), and finally as his friends are stimulated now in prison through their discussion with Socrates. In this connection it is noteworthy that Socrates was enabled to live for a considerable time after his condemnation because the ship of the embassy to Delos was delayed by wind on its return voyage to Athens (*Phaedo* 58 B–C; cf. Xen. *Mem.* 4. 8. 2). The wind, which was unfavourable for a speedy voyage, will have been sent by Apollo, the god in whose honour the ship was sent (58 B) and to whom Socrates was consecrated as a fellow servant of the swans (85 B), in order to allow him and his friends to have some time to engage together in enquiry.

There are several interpretations concerning the identity of the

first voyage.[112] As Socrates in the *Phaedo* does not employ the phrase 'the first voyage', or explicitly mention what is contrasted with his second voyage, it is very difficult to identify it. But our considerations so far suggest that if Socrates has in mind anything to be contrasted with his second voyage, it must be an investigation carried out by some easy and unreliable method comparable to a fair wind. As such a method we can think of both relying on the senses and learning from someone else, to both of which Socrates had recourse in his previous enquiry (i.e. in the voyage prior in time), only to end up being so utterly blinded as to unlearn even what he had previously thought he knew (cf. 96 C, 99 C 8–9, D). If they happen to lead to any truth by any chance, it will certainly be thanks to divine inspiration.

Thus, for Socrates the second voyage is never inferior to the first. It is certainly laborious, but the labour is the price to be paid for safety and steadiness. I even doubt whether the phrase 'second voyage' was ever employed in ancient times merely in the sense of 'second best' or *pis aller*, without any connotation of safety.[113] At least Plato and Aristotle employed it with the latter connotation for human beings. And certainly in the *Phaedo*, it is better and safer for men to take refuge in *logoi*, escaping from the senses, in that it keeps them safe from the danger of being blinded (99 D–E). Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility of the occasional use of the phrase in the mere sense of 'second best': at any rate, even a safe course is a second best for those who hate labour; but if Socrates had employed the phrase this way in conformity with lazy people, his use of it would have certainly been ironical.

[112] There have been three main interpretations: (1) the method of the physicists (a possibility that e.g. Goodrich, '*Phaedo* 96 A–102 A' (1903), 382, and Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 127 n. 5, cite without endorsing); (2) the ideal of teleological explanation (Gallop, *Phaedo*, 176; Rose, 'Plous', 464, 469, 473; Murphy, '*Πλοῦς*', 42); (3) the ideal of complete certainty either by learning from another or by discovering for oneself (Shipton, 'Second-best', 34, 39–40, 47). A 'discovery of the detailed operations of Mind throughout the universe' may be subsumed under (2) (Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 137; Tanaka, *Platon*, 274). On the other hand, although 'the vision of "the good" hastily conjured up and as hastily withdrawn by Anaxagoras' (Goodrich, 382) looks similar to (2), the attitude of Goodrich towards this vision of the good is not so positive, since he regards the second voyage as only in a qualified sense inferior to the first: for human beings he takes it to be the best. Also, '"clear knowledge" or divine inspiration' (Robinson, *Dialectic*, 145) may be subsumed under (3).

[113] Polybius too used the phrase at 8. 36. 6, with the implication that the second voyage is safer.

5. The second voyage and the quest for the good

Our investigation into Socrates' use of the phrase 'second voyage' thus shows that the destination of his new voyage remains the same as before, with only his methodology being improved. And this improvement suggests that he embarked anew on the difficult task in which he had failed before, that of teleological explanation. However, there is no explicit reference to the good as *aitia* in 99 D ff.: does this not suggest that he has after all given up the quest for the good?

We have to be careful here about what exactly constitutes Socrates' second voyage. We know that its methodology consists of the *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis, but we are not certain of its identity. For, strictly speaking, Socrates' second voyage is what he embarked on long before, after his decision to employ the *logoi* method.[114] Although such things as the discovery of Formal *aitiai* may overlap with the actual voyage, what we see now in 99 D ff. is basically 'a display of how [ἦ] I have undertaken the second voyage with a view to the seeking of the *aitia*' (99 C 9–D 2), i.e. a display of the *methodology* of the second voyage rather than a display of the second voyage itself.

To be more exact, the second voyage is what Plato presupposes in the *Phaedo* as the enquiry Socrates has already made by the new methodology in quest of *aitiai*. Is Plato then writing the *Phaedo* on the supposition that Socrates has made any progress towards discovery of the good, beyond a simple conviction that the good is the real *aitia*, or on the supposition that he has decided to do without the good? It is implausible to suggest that in the *Phaedo* Plato both adopted the latter supposition and made Socrates hold such a firm conviction about the good as to declare 'To learn about this kind of *aitia* how it is, I would gladly become *anyone*'s pupil' (99 C 6–8). For the *Phaedo* is the dialogue in which Plato depicts the last day of Socrates, who was for him the personification of undaunted and painstaking enquiry (cf. *Symp.* 203 D–204 A, 216 A, D–E); besides, Socrates is depicted as having arrived at the stage where the target of his lifelong search, which includes the comprehension of the good (65 D 7), is at last to be achieved when he is freed from the body

[114] I owe this important point to Professor Sedley.

(64 A). Also, the new methodology is a good instrument applicable even to the quest for the good.[115]

It is true that Plato makes Socrates admit in *Republic* 6, 506 B–E, that he does not know the good.[116] But this does not mean that Plato regards Socrates as having made no progress towards its discovery. For the knowledge Socrates disowns here is supposed to be the definitional knowledge of the good which the historical Socrates continued to seek in order to be able to explain why it is good for each thing to be such and such. It is natural for Socrates to disown it: to claim to have discovered it would completely violate his profession of ignorance. Even on his last day in the *Phaedo* Socrates had not yet attained the knowledge that would enable him to know why it is good for each thing to be such and such, and thus he had to content himself with a myth at the end of the dialogue.[117] But the lack of this kind of knowledge is quite compatible with the possession of some degree of cognition about the good: just after disowning definitional knowledge of the good, Socrates in the *Republic* suggests that he does have some thoughts about the good (506 E 2 *τοῦ γε δοκοῦντος ἐμοί*).

In the *Phaedo*, too, Plato attributes some degree of cognition about the good to Socrates, for he makes Socrates explain why it is good for all human beings to die (62 A ff.). Thus Socrates is supposed to have attained some cognition about the good, at least concerning the destruction or passing away of human beings in this universe. This destruction is the separation of body and soul, and therefore, in order confidently to affirm its goodness, Socrates must be able to prove the indestructibility of the soul (70 A–B). This is how his attempts to prove the soul's indestructibility have started in the *Phaedo*.

It is time to take stock. We have left two questions unanswered, 'Why is whatever is *ἀθάνατος* indestructible?' and 'Why did Socrates leave this crucial proposition unexamined, if he himself had found the answer?' From our quest concerning the second voyage the answer to the second question is clear: it is not good for his friends simply to learn from Socrates without their own consideration, or even from some deity; just as it was good for Socrates to embark

[115] Cf. Robinson, *Dialectic*, 143–4.

[116] Professor Sedley drew my attention to this passage.

[117] For the reading of the myth as an introduction to teleological cosmology see D. Sedley, 'Teleology and Myth in the *Phaedo*', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 5 (1990), 359–83.

on a new enquiry by his new methodology in the second voyage, it is good for them to embark on their own enquiries, employing the methodology they have learnt from Socrates.

As to the first question, let us consider why, at the very beginning of his attempt to persuade Cebes that the soul is altogether *ἀθάνατος* and indestructible, Socrates talked about his encounter with Anaxagoras' Intellect and the necessity of teleological explanation (97 B 8–99 C 8). It seems to me that it is just because without taking the good into account it is impossible to answer the first question. This way we can make Socrates' talk about Anaxagoras' Intellect play some role in the *Phaedo*; otherwise it would become an episode or parenthesis unconnected with the main enquiry of the dialogue, inserted merely to adumbrate Plato's ideal of teleological explanation.[118] In order to be persuaded of the soul's indestructibility, it is necessary to take the good into account and consider why it is good for whatever is *ἀθάνατος* to be indestructible. In Plato's view Socrates has already found his own answer to this question.

What is the answer? And how can Socrates' friends attain it? Plato thinks Socrates has already arrived at the answer, but as to his own state, we should suppose Plato regards himself as one of those who are told by Socrates to continue investigation and examine more clearly the first hypotheses (107 B). Nevertheless, it seems that he has some idea about where he should head for in the quest recommended by Socrates, and has left some hint in the *Phaedo*. He makes Socrates deliver a parting injunction to his friends: they should take care of themselves by following in their life the traces Socrates has left through the present and earlier discussions (115 B). To reread the discussion of the *Phaedo* from the beginning will certainly be one of the ways to follow the traces of Socrates.

So let us read again the *Phaedo*, searching for the answer to the question why whatever is *ἀθάνατος* is indestructible, or why the soul as the thing that brings up life into whatever it enters is indestructible. We shall then notice that life is what is brought up by the soul (105 D 3–4), and that the soul's essential activity is that of intellect (e.g. 65 C, 66 A–67 A, 79 C–D, 80 E, 83 A–84 B). It is true that for most people other aspects of life, such as eating, pleasures, and pains, are essential things that constitute human life; this is why they regard philosophers as nearly dead (64 B). But for

[118] Goodrich, '*Phaedo* 96 A–102 A' (1903), 381–2, takes 97 B–99 C as such a parenthesis; see also Murphy, '*Πλοῦς*', 42 n. 1.

Socrates life consists in the activity of intellect: it is after all what the soul brings up to the body, whereas such things as eating are what the body affords us because of its need for nurture (66 B–C).[119] When he presents the Recollection Argument (72 E–78 B) and the Affinity Argument (78 B–84 B), the soul whose indestructibility is in question is evidently the soul as the subject of intellectual activities. By contrasting the majority view and his own opinion on what really constitutes human life, Socrates is supposed to be asking his friends and the readers of the *Phaedo* which position they take, and on what advice they are going to live; it seems also that he is addressing his proofs of the soul's indestructibility to those who will accept his view and follow in his tracks for a thorough investigation.

So let us admit that life consists in the activity of intellect, in order to understand the last proof. What can we say, then, about the fate of the soul, which brings up life (i.e. the activity of intellect) into whatever it enters? According to *Phaedo* 97 C–99 B, the activity of intellect consists in aiming at realization of the good, as the story about Anaxagoras' Intellect suggests. This means that the question of the indestructibility of the soul boils down to the question of the indestructibility of the soul as the thing that works together with Intellect to realize the good in the universe through its own life and intellectual activities. It seems to me that at this stage of the proof the good comes in as the ultimate *aitia* for the indestructibility of the soul, for 'all things are bound and held together by the good and binding' (99 C 5–6); in a universe held together by the good it must be good for the soul as a co-worker of Intellect to be indestructible.

Socrates must have been fully convinced of the supreme power of the good and the soul's indestructibility guaranteed by it. But at the same time he must have felt it necessary to turn his conviction into knowledge, and for this purpose he continued considering how each thing comes to be and is destroyed under the guidance of the good. It is, then, still more necessary for us, his followers including Plato, to enquire into the good as *aitia*, in order to be persuaded to the fullest possible degree that the soul is indestructible in a world governed by the good, and to approach the stage of cognition Socrates wanted us to reach, following in his tracks. Thus when, on Socrates' advice, we examine the first hypotheses of the final

[119] As Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 52 n. 1, points out, Socrates even employs διάνοια (intellect) instead of ψυχή at one point (67 C 3).

proof more clearly, we are led to embark on our own second voyage with a view to the seeking of the good as *aitia*. Plato's philosophical activities after the *Phaedo* can be regarded as his attempt to do just that.

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THRASYMACHUS AND DEFINITION

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STEPHEN EVERSON's sparkling paper, 'The Incoherence of Thrasymachus' ['Incoherence'],[1] argues, against a number of other interpreters, including myself in 'The Virtues of Thrasymachus' ['Virtues'],[2] that Thrasymachus' position in *Republic* book 1 is incoherent. There is much in Everson's paper that I enthusiastically accept. For a start, I now much more nearly agree with him about the relative importance of Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's challenges than I did when I wrote 'Virtues', and first heard his objections to it in conversation. Again, I happily applaud his suggestion that part of the point of the encounter with Thrasymachus is to demonstrate how the old-style Socratic method makes 'Socrates' pursuit of understanding' hostage to his interlocutor's 'own level of understanding and ability to follow an argument', and why, therefore, it is 'philosophically useful to provide Socrates with the more docile and passive interlocutors we find in the rest of the *Republic*' (Everson, 'Incoherence', 131). Since the docility and passivity of Socrates' interlocutors is one of *Republic* 2–10's most perplexing and infuriating features (though some other features come to mind too), it is nice to have an apt explanation of it. Given the starkly contrasting *lack* of docility and passivity displayed by Thrasymachus as an interlocutor (*Rep.* 336 B), Everson's explanation fits the data well.

But I do want to dissent from Everson's eponymous thesis. I still think that Thrasymachus' position in *Republic* book 1 is not incoherent, whatever else may be wrong with it (implausibility, for instance). The evidence that Everson offers for the thesis that Thrasymachus is incoherent is unconvincing. He writes ('Incoherence', 115–16):

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[1] *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 16 (1998), 99–131.

[2] *Phronesis*, 38 (1993), 1–17.

The tyrant is [on Thrasymachus' account at 344 A–C] unjust because he ignores the interests of other people and acts entirely for his own, forcing others to act to his advantage also. On [Thrasymachus'] first account of justice this is nonsensical, since the tyrant is being judged to be unjust without reference to the law, when that is the only standard by which the question can be determined. The tyrant is unjust not because he acts illegally—his own mastery of the craft of ruling will have ensured that he does not need to do that[3]—but because he is both selfish and powerful.

For Everson, then, Thrasymachus is incoherent because he holds *both*

(A) that justice and injustice can be defined only in terms of law-abidingness and its opposite,

and *also*

(B) that some people are unjust in a sense of 'injustice' that has nothing to do with a legalistic definition of justice.

Briefly, my only argument is with *only*—with the exclusivity of (A). Where is the evidence that Thrasymachus holds that justice and injustice can be defined *only* in terms of law-abidingness and its opposite? Indeed, where is the evidence that Thrasymachus holds that justice and injustice can be (strictly) *defined* at all?

The point of this second question is to focus attention on the crucial Section III of Everson's paper, the upshot of which is the thesis that Thrasymachus, at least until he becomes incoherent, offers an exclusively conventionalist definition of justice. But what does Everson mean by 'definition'? He writes ('Incoherence', 104):

[It is difficult to determine] what constraints, if any . . . [Thrasymachus] would accept on what will count as a definition . . . Since there is no reason to think that Thrasymachus is supposed to have any considered views about what formal properties a definition should have, the right question to ask

[3] In fact, Thrasymachus tells us, tyranny 'through stealth or force carries off [ἀφαιρεῖται] the property of others, whether sacred or profane, public or private' (*Rep.* 344 A). This sounds pretty much like illegal behaviour to me. It does not seem important to Thrasymachus, as it must be to Everson, to insist that a tyrant—or a perfect tyrant, even—*never* acts illegally. Nor does actual experience, to which Thrasymachus constantly refers us, suggest this point. Even the most comprehensively consistent tyrants of history—Hitler, for instance, or Archelaus (*Gorg.* 471 A–D), or the Thirty at Athens—typically operated by a *mixture* of biased legislation and mere illegality. Indeed, perhaps that's just what Thrasymachus means by 'stealth and force'.

is whether Thrasymachus thinks that by knowing that justice benefits the stronger one understands its nature.

So far, I agree. I add only two small remarks. First: since, as Everson rightly observes, 'there is no reason to think that Thrasymachus is supposed to have any considered views about what formal properties a definition should have', it follows that there is no reason to think that Thrasymachus holds that a definition must specify necessary and sufficient conditions for its definiendum, either.

Second: up to this point, it looks as if Everson thinks (as I do) that (U) is true:

(U) Thrasymachus thinks that, for all x, a definition of x gives us an understanding of the nature of x.

However, Everson's next sentence is: 'In this context to ask whether something is intended as a definition of justice is just [*sic*] to ask whether it is intended to specify what it is to be just.' From this sentence it looks as if Everson thinks that (S) is true:

(S) Thrasymachus thinks that, for all F, a definition of F-ness specifies what it is to be F.

Now, are (U) and (S) equivalent, or not? Everson advances these claims in consecutive sentences, and so gives us no argument connecting them. A reflex application of the principle of charity (see Everson, 'Incoherence', 101) would be to interpret them as equivalents. But this would be *too* reflex. For reading on, we encounter the following remarks ('Incoherence', 107–8; emphasis added):

> it is unlikely that even [the claim that justice is the advantage of the established government] is intended as a definition of justice, *if we take a definition as specifying some property with which justice is to be identified* . . . [the claim that whatever laws the government makes must be obeyed by their subjects, and ⟨that⟩ this is justice] *is much more stable if it is taken to identify acting justly with acting according to the law* than if it were taken to cite actions which are in obedience to the law merely as one type of just action . . . Taking [the conventionalist claim] to *specify* what it is to act justly allows us to find a coherent argument in [338 c–339 c].

These remarks of Everson's plainly imply the following three theses:

(PI) Thrasymachus thinks that, for all F, a definition of F-ness

specifies some property with which *F*-ness is to be identified.

[*Justification*: Everson argues that the first claim in the last quotation can't for Thrasymachus be an adequate definition of justice because it does not satisfy the condition expressed by Everson's words 'if we take a definition as specifying some property with which justice is to be identified'. The condition these words express, presumably, is that a definition of justice *should* specify some property with which justice is to be identified; and the point is that Thrasymachus is supposed to accept this as a condition on adequate definitions.]

(PJ) Thrasymachus thinks that to define justice, it is sufficient to identify one property (acting justly) with another (acting according to the law).

[*Justification*: Everson argues that the sort of conventionalist-sounding claim sometimes made by Thrasymachus 'is much more stable if it is taken' as a property-identity, i.e. taken 'to identify acting justly with acting according to the law'.]

(PS) Thrasymachus thinks that to define justice, to specify what it is to act justly, to specify some property with which justice is to be identified, and to identify the property of acting justly with another property, are all the same thing.

[*Justification*: Everson's startling reversion to saying that conventionalism *specifies* what it is to act justly in the last sentence of the last quotation.]

Thus Everson's development of his case surreptitiously builds up around Thrasymachus' actual remarks a formidable battery of highly sophisticated doctrines about the nature of definition. These views impose stringently demanding conditions on what can count as a definition. They not only go beyond (U)'s very modest demand that a Thrasymachean definition of *x* should 'give us an understanding of the nature of *x*'. Since they require definitions to state actual property identities, they even go beyond requiring that a definition should specify necessary and sufficient conditions for its definiendum.

But Everson says nothing at all that I can see to justify this concentration of logical forces on behalf of his reading of Thrasymachus. Without any detectable argument or textual support from Plato, he slides between the five claims I have displayed above as

if they were all straightforwardly interchangeable: from (U) to (S), from (S) to (PI) and (PJ), and finally to (PS), which implies (S) once more. Moreover, Everson gives us no reason to think that any of (S) or (PI) or (PJ) or (PS) is true. Indeed, he has already given us reason to think that these theses are all false: as I pointed out above, we have Everson's own word for it that 'there is no reason to think that Thrasymachus is supposed to have any considered views about what formal properties a definition should have'. Since at least the last four theses just mentioned ascribe to Thrasymachus exceedingly considered views about the formal properties of definitions, there is every reason to think that we should reject all four of them.

But if we do reject them, we are left only with (U). And if (U) is all Thrasymachus understands by a definition, then Everson's accusation of incoherence cannot get off the ground. Suppose, with (U), that a Thrasymachean definition of x is merely some remark about x that gives us 'an understanding of the nature of x': it is a remark that indicates a *diagnostic* property of x, a property that shows what x is 'really all about', rather than a formal specification of a property-identity between x and something else. If this is right, then there need be no inconsistency whatever between Thrasymachus' different remarks about justice. It may be a contradiction to hold both

(A) that justice and injustice can be defined *only* in terms of law-abidingness and its opposite,

and also

(B) that some people are unjust in a sense of 'injustice' that has nothing to do with a legalistic definition of justice;

but there is no contradiction at all between (B) and, say,

(C) *As things are*, just actions are *typically* in accordance with (perhaps required by) the laws of the state, and unjust actions are *typically* violations of those laws;

and so Everson's incoherence vanishes.

So *is* (U) all Thrasymachus understands by a definition? That seems to me overwhelmingly more probable than it is quietly to credit him with Everson's budget of highly sophisticated, and in fact Platonic, views about definition as strict property-identity. (Everson, 'Incoherence', 105: 'When Socrates asks whether *this*

is justice—for the subjects to obey whatever laws are instituted—the demonstrative here gives a very clear impression that the one property is claimed to be identical with the other' (339 A *καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ δίκαιον*). Really? When the Apostle James says that 'Pure religion . . . is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world'(James 1: 27 *θρησκεία καθαρὰ αὕτη ἐστίν*), does *that* give a clear impression that the one property is claimed to be identical with the other?) For another thing, the evidence of the Platonic corpus is that Socratic views about definition were *exceptional* in his society;[4] *a fortiori*, so were Platonic views. Typically, intelligent Athenians assumed that to define x was to give good examples of x or to cite some types of x (*Meno* 71 E–72 A; *Theaet.* 146 A ff.; contrast Everson, 'Incoherence', 108, first paragraph). We know that Socrates dissented from this assumption, and it seems likely that, for instance, his disciple Antisthenes did too (Arist. *Metaph.* $1043^{b}23$ ff.). But I recall no evidence that the historical Thrasymachus dissented, and there is certainly no sign of such dissent from the *Republic*'s Thrasymachus.

Moreover, that supposition explains the 'cynical paradox' (Sidgwick, cited by Everson, 'Incoherence', 102) with which Thrasymachus begins his exposition of his own views (and for which he seems to expect applause: *Rep.* 338 C). Someone whose aim is not to specify property-identities, but only to indicate the *diagnostic* properties of x, is much likelier to proceed by way of (what are meant to be) dazzling one-liners, 'maxims and arrows' as Nietzsche called them, than by way of strict definitions: and dazzling one-liners are precisely what Thrasymachus tries to produce.

My view is still that Thrasymachus' concern is 'to tell us what, as a matter of fact, justice is like; to observe and describe[5] the social

[4] G. Santas, *Socrates* (London, 1979), 6: 'where all the Greeks praised the virtues to the skies, Socrates raised . . . a question that apparently nobody had thought of before, and certainly nobody understood or pursued in a Socratic way: What *is* virtue? That is, what is it that is common to all the things we count as virtue and by reason of which they are virtue? . . . We have repeated testimony of the startling originality of Socrates' question in the fact that again and again the interlocutors do not understand what Socrates is asking; he has to amplify and illustrate in order to make them understand his sort of question, and he has to set them straight about what *sort* of answer he is seeking.'

[5] This description, incidentally, includes a description of the contradictions inherent in the practice of justice. That was the point of my distinction between prescriptive and descriptive theses about justice (Chappell, 'Virtues', 3). For anyone

practice called justice' (Chappell, 'Virtues', 11), and to do this not by what Plato, or Everson, would count as formal definitions, but by strikingly and illuminatingly subversive generalizations about the workings of justice in society. There isn't the slightest reason to convert these generalizations into formal definitions and then complain that, so taken, they contradict each other. This is not a point about interpretative charity:[6] it is a point about taking the text as it stands.

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who believes in justice, there is a contradiction in saying that the very same feature of *x*, *x*'s justice, both prescribes doing *x* and prescribes not doing *x*: there is no contradiction in describing some social institution (e.g. justice) as self-contradictory. If Everson's n. 23 ('Incoherence', 116–17) finds a flaw in this line of reasoning, I can't see it. Nor did I fail, as Everson alleges, to canvass the possibility that Thrasymachus takes '*x* is just' to state a reason not to do *x*. Since my view is that Thrasymachus sees justice as neither a virtue nor a vice but a device, it follows, as I explicitly argue ('Virtues', 12–13), that Thrasymachus does *not* take '*x* is just' to state a reason not to do *x*, nor to do it, unless so doing would be in accord with Thrasymachus' virtue of practical intelligence, e.g. because it is advantageous.

[6] And in any case, on the principle of charity, cf. Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1991), 236: 'The principle has the look of legitimising an appeal to sentiment to settle a question of truth. Not so. It has a sound basis in the fact that *belief is dispositional*'.

FLUX AND LANGUAGE IN THE *THEAETETUS*

ALLAN SILVERMAN

I WANT to examine again Plato's refutation of the Heracliteans at 181 B 8–183 C 4 of the *Theaetetus*. About how we are to read this argument in particular, and about how we are to view the dialectic of the first part of the *Theaetetus* of which it is a part, there are well-known differences of opinion. One side, carrying the banner of a tradition dating back deep into antiquity,[1] finds continuity between the *Theaetetus* and the middle-period dialogues. Another contingent finds dissonance between the earlier metaphysics and epistemology and the conclusions to be drawn from the arguments of the *Theaetetus*. While there are many different interpretations within each camp, a main, though surely not the only, source of contention between the two can be put in simple terms: Does the argument at 181 show that *Forms* are needed to save the phenomena of language or not? A representative of the first side answers affirmatively.[2] Representatives of the other camp answer in the negative.[3] I answer in the affirmative.

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[1] See D. Sedley, 'Three Platonist Interpretations of the *Theaetetus*' ['Three Interpretations'], in C. Gill and M. M. McCabe (eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (Oxford, 1996), 79–103.

[2] Cornford is the best known: F. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* [*Knowledge*] (Indianapolis, 1957).

[3] Owen and Burnyeat are perhaps the best known: G. E. L. Owen, 'The Place of the Timaeus in Plato's Dialogues' ['Place'], in M. Nussbaum (ed.), *Logic, Science and Dialectic* (Ithaca, NY, 1986), 65–84 at 72. M. Burnyeat, *The* Theaetetus *of Plato* [*Theaetetus*] (Indianaopolis, 1990). See also M. Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self-refutation in Later Greek Philosophy', *Philosophical Review*, 85 (1976), 44–59; 'Protagoras and Self-refutation in Plato's *Theaetetus*' ['Self-refutation'], ibid. 172–95; and 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley

In order to defend either interpretation, one has to situate the Heraclitean doctrine within the first part of the *Theaetetus*. In order to understand, however, why the interpretation of this argument has generated so much heat, one must also consider its relation to the doctrines of the middle-period dialogues, especially the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, as well as the later dialogues. The argument at 181–3 has the form of a self-refutation:[4] if everything is in flux, then language is impossible; but language is possible; therefore, it is not the case that everything is in flux. The details of the argument and the nature of self-refutation arguments will be addressed at the beginning of Section 2. For the moment, let us concentrate on the issue of flux. If, with Cornford, we look to the *Theaetetus* and the middle-period works, then 'everything' will include both particulars and Forms. If, on the other hand, we confine ourselves to the first part of the *Theaetetus*, then 'everything' will include only particulars. Cornford maintained that in the middle period, as well as in the first part of the *Theaetetus*, Platonic particulars were in flux. Since the argument shows that something must not be in flux, Forms must be exempted from flux. Hence the argument shows that there are Forms. Owen and others, noting that Forms are nowhere mentioned in the *Theaetetus*, maintained that the argument showed that particulars cannot be in flux. Hence if the middle Plato believed that particulars were in flux, he now rejects that notion.

Cornford's position contained two theses, one about Forms, one about Platonic particulars. His opponents took issue with his interpretation of the first part of the *Theaetetus* and what he viewed as its support for the Platonic doctrine of particulars subject to flux, and consequently his idea that the *Theaetetus* and the other late dialogues indicate no revolutionary changes in the theory of Forms. In part their rejection of Cornford is due to their disagreement about the role of the Heraclitean account within the *Theaetetus*, as well as his interpretation of the self-refutation argument itself. In part, however, their disagreement is due to a different conception of the role of Forms and particulars in the late dialogues. 'Flux is

Missed' ['Idealism'], ibid. 90 (1982), 3–40; also J. McDowell, *Plato:* Theaetetus [*Theaetetus*], (Oxford, 1973).

[4] For the purposes of this paper, I shall not distinguish self-refutation arguments from *reductio ad absurdum* arguments. Provided that strategic directions isolate the premiss to be rejected, and assuming that the sorts of premisses in play in the arguments appeal to conceptual necessities or conditions for language or assertion, *reductios* and self-refutations will play out the same way (see n. 33).

nonsense about anything,' Owen insisted,[5] and hence particulars cannot be in flux. The *Theaetetus* thus signals Plato's rehabilitation of the particular and, concomitantly, his diminution or elimination of Forms, a project continued in the *Philebus*, *Parmenides*, and other late dialogues. I do not believe that the *Theaetetus* or the late dialogues do without separated Forms or diminish their importance, though they do emphasize aspects and roles for Forms different from those emphasized in the middle-period works. On the other hand, I agree that flux, as interpreted by Owen and others, is nonsense about anything, though I doubt that Plato's particulars were ever subject to such an extreme version of flux. However, I do not think that the argument at 181–3 shows that particulars cannot be in flux. It does not show this, I shall argue, because if particulars are in flux it does not follow that language is impossible. Put the other way around, I shall argue that what the argument shows is that if *properties* are in flux, then language is impossible. It will turn out that if *properties* are in flux, then so *too* are particulars. But the status of particulars is ancillary to the success of the argument. My strategy, then, will be to address the argument with these questions in mind: What kind of flux is depicted in the argument? and What kind of flux renders language impossible?

Of course it is true that Forms are not *explicitly* mentioned at 181 ff. But this is not an insuperable obstacle. From the outset, readers of the *Theaetetus* viewed it as a 'negative' defence of Forms. The very absence of Forms is responsible for the dialogue's failure to arrive at an adequate account of knowledge.[6] In a similar fashion, it can be argued that the collapse of language in a world where properties and particulars are in flux points to the need for Forms. But it is not necessary, I believe, to trust entirely to an argument from silence. For sprinkled throughout the first part of the *Theaetetus* are signs indicating that the root of the difficulties

[5] Owen, 'Place', 73.

[6] I do not mean to suggest that there was uniformity in the way the ancients interpreted the negative defence. Some emphasized the *Meno*'s definition of knowledge as *aitias logismos* and made special note of the absence of the doctrine of recollection. Others looked more to the *Republic* and its doubly divided line. One plausible meshing of the *Theaetetus* with the *Republic* takes the three successive definitions—knowledge is perception, knowledge is true belief, and knowledge is true belief plus an account—to line up with the first three stages of the line, *eikasia*, *pistis*, and *dianoia*. Thus the failure of these three definitions points to Forms and the fourth stage, *nous*, whatever account there may be of that, as the only possible answer to the question 'What is Knowledge?' See Sedley, 'Three Interpretations'.

which destroy the Heraclitean/Protagorean/Theaetetan doctrine is its denial of Forms. I think it not implausible to regard talk of properties, as opposed to particulars or perhaps even tropes, i.e. property instances, as an indicator of the presence of Forms. Properties, and especially properties free from flux, are what Plato takes Forms to be. More specifically, I think that when we encounter entities described as *auto kath' auto* beings,[7] *onta* that are what they are in their own right, *onta* that are ones or unities, as opposed to being many or complex, we have reason to regard such entities as Forms. These are canonical descriptions of Forms in the middle-period works, and in denying that there are any such entities I take the Heraclitean to be denying that their ontology admits Forms or Form-like properties. If the identification of Forms with properties holds, then by showing that properties free from flux are necessary if language is to be possible, the refutation of the Heracliteans does show that Forms are needed.

That the refutation does concern properties is not universally accepted. One reason is that they do not seem to play a significant role in the defence of Theaetetus' first definition, to which end Plato introduces both the Heraclitean Doctrine of Flux (H) and the Measure Doctrine of Protagoras (M). I shall argue, to the contrary, that properties play a critical role. A second reason is that initially, at least, the refutation seems to begin from considerations of exchange or succession of properties. By its end, however, it is the flux of properties that secures for Plato the conclusion that language is impossible. Moreover, I think that the fact that at the outset (182 A) of the argument Plato directs our attention to the notion of quality, *ποιότης*, heralds their critical role in the defence. To see why they are so important requires that we turn first to the opening moves of the first part of the dialogue, where the three doctrines are introduced. The examination of this part will take us through the so-called Doctrine of Twins (156–157 C 3), from which the qualities mentioned at 182 are derived. Since the Twins Doctrine and (H) are adduced to support the Measure Doctrine, we shall also have to consider the nature of Protagoras' relativism. In the second part of the paper I shall turn to the argument at 181–3 and some interpretations of it.

[7] Cf. G. Vlastos, '"Separation" in Plato', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 5 (1987), 187–96.

1. The three doctrines

If we are to see why Heracliteanism renders language impossible, one prerequisite is to determine the content of (H). If we are to do this, we must see how this apparently ontological theory comes to be present in an examination of Theaetetus' first definition that knowledge is perception. The definition of knowledge as perception, 151E 6, Protagoras' Measure Doctrine, and the Heraclitean Ontology of Flux are introduced as closely related to one another. Precisely how they are related is quite controversial, both because there is uncertainty over the extent of (M) and (H), and because (M) and (H) seem to evolve over the course of the first part of the dialogue. Socrates introduces Protagoras immediately on the heels of Theaetetus' definition: Protagoras said the same thing[8] in a rather different way (152 A 1–2). It is reasonable to infer from the equation that Protagoras' doctrine is confined to the perceptual sphere, as opposed to ranging over beliefs about any subject, including second-order beliefs, e.g. the belief that every belief is true (for the one whose belief it is). Support for the narrower range is drawn from the example of the wind appearing cold to one and not cold to another, and from the summary at 152 C 1–2: '*Phantasia* and *aisthēsis* then are the same with respect to hot things and all such.' Similar lessons are drawn from the exposition of the Doctrine of Twins, 156 A 2–157 C 3, although that doctrine is advanced as an extension of the Heraclitean Ontology and despite the fact that at its end the range of predicates/properties is far wider than the perceptual realm. Support for the broader range can be drawn from the subsequent arguments in the first part, many of which are devoted to non-perceptual beliefs, e.g. beliefs about the good, about the advantageous, or about a person's beliefs in general, e.g. the belief that all beliefs are true.

The Heraclitean doctrine takes the stage immediately after (M), 152 D 2–E 1, and is said to be a secret teaching of Protagoras that he revealed only to his disciples. First we are told that 'nothing is one (thing) in its own right', ὡς ἄρα ἓν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ οὐδέν

[8] 152 A 2 τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα. It will transpire that it is impossible, according to (M) and (H), that anyone could say or think the same things as another. Often I think Plato is punning when, speaking on behalf of the Protagorean, he talks of saying the same thing. See e.g. 154 B 8, where he has just insisted that nothing ever appears the same in two different appearances.

ἐστιν (152 D 2–3). Next it is said that one could not correctly call it anything nor of any sort, 'but if you call it large, it will also *appear* small and so on for absolutely everything, σύμπαντά τε οὕτως, because nothing is one nor anything nor of any sort' (152 D 5–6). Finally, it is said that all things which we incorrectly say 'are' come to be with respect to one another from movement, change, and mixture with one another[9]—nothing ever is, but rather always becomes (152 D 7–8).

These are three distinct claims. The emphasis of the first is unclear: is it on the 'one' or on the 'in its own right'? Clear, however, are the echoes from the middle Platonic Theory of Forms (cf. *Phaedo* 66 A 2, 78 C 10–79 A 3). Forms are precisely items that are what they are in their own right and they are ones or unities. But the thrust of the Theaetetan and Protagorean doctrines seemed to concern sensibles, or more generally items in the physical world. These ordinary particulars, however, were not thought by Plato to be *auto kath' auto* entities and were precisely not any one thing. Rather they were regarded *by Plato* as *suntheta*, complexes of many things, including many properties, some of which may be compresent opposite properties, and in the light of their failure to be, and, perhaps equivalently, in the light of the fact that each is a many, precluded from being objects of knowledge. The third and final paraphrase of the secret doctrine is an expansion of this first point. Its introduction of the *pros allēla* relation directs us to place the emphasis on the *auto kath' auto* aspect of the first claim. Nothing is anything in its own right, according to the secret doctrine, because it is what it is in virtue of a reciprocal relation it bears to another item. Each thing never is anything at all, because it derives all its qualifications via some process of change with its reciprocal partner and thus is better or more accurately said to become whatever it (we would typically say) is. At this point, however, we are not told how to understand this proclamation. Why is it that something cannot be said to *be* what it is *pros allēla*: in a reciprocal relation to another item? Why must we treat it as a becoming?

The second point is hard to integrate with the other two. Like the first, it has a heritage in the middle-period dialogues' remarks about particulars. As Owen, Fine, and others have argued,[10] the fact that

[9] Levett takes πρὸς ἄλληλα with the genitive κράσεως. Perhaps it is better to take it as common between both κράσεως and γίγνεται (152 D 7–8).

[10] G. E. L. Owen, 'A Proof In The *Peri Ideon*', in Nussbaum (ed.), *Logic, Sci-*

particulars will seem different in different contexts is partly responsible for Plato's thesis that the physical world is in flux. According to their account, there are Forms only for those properties subject to this aspect flux and, it seems, particulars fail to qualify as objects of knowledge just in so far as they suffer from the compresence of opposite sensible properties. These middle-period passages suggest limiting Protagoreanism to sensible properties, which is also supported by Plato's use here in the second point of the idiom of appearance and his mention of large, small, heavy, and light, in order to connect the Heraclitean account to the Protagorean and hence Theaetetan doctrines. On the other hand, the first claim, on its face, was quite general, indeed universal—*nothing* is any one thing in its own right. If we emphasize its scope, then perceptual properties are mere, though perhaps the best, examples. Moreover, the future tense of the verb seems not to help us to understand the first claim. The fact that what appears to be small *will* appear later as large does not undercut the fact that it *is* now small and later *will be* large. Change or succession of properties does not imply, on its own, the absence of 'being'.[11] The example of the wind shows us a response to this worry: we are to treat the future tense not strictly temporally, but as indicating the likelihood (certainty) that two individuals simultaneously will say of the wind that it is cold and not cold. Nothing so far specifies the status of the wind or its persistence across different appearances. Emphasis on the first and third points implies that the wind too is nothing in its own right, that all we have here is *talk* of the same wind. But the second point does help forge a connection between the first and third. Nothing is anything in its own right because it always comes to be *pros allēla*. Talk of how it will appear is thus an example of this coming to be with respect to another. The Protagorean agent to whom it appears is one relatum; what appears, either the wind, the cold, or the wind's being cold, is the other.

How, then, are Theaetetus' definition, (M), and (H) connected to one another? The first task is to unpack Theaetetus' definition.

ence and Dialectic, 165–79; G. Fine, *On Ideas* (Oxford, 1993), esp. ch. 4; D. Bostock, *Plato's* Theaetetus [*Theaetetus*] (Oxford 1988); T. Irwin, 'Plato's Heracliteanism' ['Heracliteanism'], *Philosophical Quarterly*, 27 (1977), 1–13; J. Cooper, *Plato's* Theaetetus [*Theaetetus*] (New York, 1990).

[11] Change, succession, and its implication for how things are will resurface in the Successionist interpretation of the refutation. See pp. 144–7.

By adducing Protagoras, all are agreed that Plato is bringing aid to Theaetetus' first baby. Socrates emphasizes that where Theaetetus had said '*aisthēsis*' Protagoras says '*phantasia*.' The question is, does (M) help to explain why instances of perception are instances of knowledge[12] or why (in all cases) knowledge and perception are identical? By restricting the scope of the Measure Doctrine to perceptual properties, we opt for the first disjunct and exclude from the account those potential areas of knowledge which are non-perceptual. (Recall the mention of mathematical knowledge and other areas of expertise not intuitively thought to be in the realm of perception (145–8).) By letting the doctrine range unrestrictedly over every object, property, or belief, we opt for the second. I favour the wider reading. The initial formulation of (M) is appropriately general: of all things man is the measure—*πάντων* emphatically placed in first position—of things that are, that they are, of things that are not, that they are not (152 A 2–4). Nothing is outside the scope of the Measure Doctrine, i.e. *there is nothing available to be known with which (M) is not concerned*. The second formulation, 'such as each thing appears to me, so it is for me, and such as it appears to you, so it is for you' (152 A 6–8), both specifies the faculty, *phantasia*, by which each of us measures the 'being' of all (his) things, and suggests how it can turn out that no one can ever fail to measure things truthfully. *Phantasia* is the only cognitive faculty or power. For the Protagorean, there is no difference between perception, *phantasia*, belief, and knowledge; there is just appearance. No one can fail to measure truthfully what there is because what there is *is determined by how the agent takes them to be*.[13] The being of things is, for Protagoras, *the result* of appearing. Since any faculty can be treated as equivalent to *phantasia*, let us say that, according to the Protagorean, believing something to be so makes it so, for the agent whose belief it is.

Put aside for the moment how we are properly to relativize this

[12] Cf. Bostock, *Theaetetus*, 41–58; Burnyeat, *Theaetetus*. Those who privilege the task of showing that all instances of perception are knowledge are given to casting the argument of the first part in terms of sense data and the incorrigible awareness of immediate perceptual judgements. I find immediacy, incorrigible awareness, and sense data notions alien to this part of the *Theaetetus*.

[13] I mean to be deliberately vague about the contents of an appearance and, for now, am not concerned to distinguish the contents of an appearance from the experience of the appearance or from the interpretation and labelling of the contents and the world the appearance is about.

claim.[14] First, note that the order of explanation and being runs from the agent to the world. There are no truths about how the world is or is not for him apart from its appearing that way to him. For instance, in order for the wind to be not cold for him it must seem to him that the wind is not cold.[15] Nor does there merely *happen* to be nothing that is so that is not believed to be so. It is not an accident of nature that all states of affairs happen to be the object of someone's belief. Rather, there is no state of affairs, *p*, prior to and apart from an agent's believing that *p*.[16] Conversely, whenever there is an appearance or a belief, there comes to be the corresponding state of affairs. This is how Protagoras helps to secure Theaetetus' definition: '*Aisthēsis* therefore is always of what is and is without falsehood, as befits its being knowledge' (152 C 5–6). Since a given *phantasia*—now equivalent to *aisthēsis* (152 B 11)—is responsible for what there is, and since a *phantasia* can never lack a corresponding state of affairs, it could not fail (ἀεί) to be of what is. And for the same reasons it cannot be mistaken; it is ἀψευδές. There is no gap between what is and what is perceived where falsehood could gain a purchase. Since there is no subject-matter or state of affairs inaccessible to perception, and since there is no possibility that perception fails to get right how the world is, and since the name we give to the faculty which gets at everything that is and always does so unerringly is 'knowledge', it turns out that perception really is knowledge; that is, it turns out not only that all instances of perception are instances of knowledge, but also that all instances of knowledge are instances of perception.

The prompt for the introduction of Heracliteanism seems to be the claim at 152 C 5 that knowledge is of what is, τοῦ ὄντος, here unrelativized. Lest he be misunderstood, Socrates now adds that 'what is' is not anything in its own right. This should come as no

[14] Settling this requires that we decide on the content of the appearance, especially whether *inside* the appearance there is something that refers to the agent, e.g. [the wind is cold-*for-me*], as opposed to for me [the wind is cold].

[15] *Pace* Burnyeat, 'Self-refutation', 178–9. I think that the notion of something's *not appearing* to a Protagorean measure is unintelligible according to (M): everything, including negated predicates, must be within the scope of an appearance. Hence nothing about truth can be concluded on the basis of what does not appear. *Contra* Burnyeat's 'P3: If it does not seem to x that p, then it is not true for x that p' (178). In a Protagorean world we must be wary of assuming the validity of classical laws of logic and rules of inference.

[16] The biconditional, *p*, iff *x* believes that *p*, cannot adequately capture the priority accorded to the belief, or to the agent in believing.

surprise once we understand that believing something to be such and so makes it such and so. Were anything, that is any being, what it is in its own right, then there would be no guarantee that everything able to be known would be the object of some *phantasia*/*aisthēsis*, for it would be what it is independent of appearances. Since how it is would be something one could know, the door would be left open for falsehood to enter. Since what is would be what it is independent of belief, it would be an open question whether (the content of) an appearance corresponds to what is. The second and third points explicate how it is that what is nothing in its own right can be made such and so by *phantasia*. The objects of belief, *aisthēsis*, knowledge, or appearing, are not only relational, *pros ti*, but reciprocally relational, *pros allēla*. Whatever is comes to be in every respect in its interaction with the believer or her belief, which also comes to be in generating what is. It is not simply the quality of what is that comes to be in relation to an appearance, not just the warmth or coldness of the wind, but the wind, warmth, coldness, in fact every object and every one of its qualities, comes to be in relation to an appearance, including the state of affairs, the wind's being cold. The notion of Heraclitean flux, then, is designed both to account for the reciprocal relation that obtains between an appearance and its object, and to secure the claim that appearance always accurately gets at what is by disallowing that anything is what it is independently of its turning up in an appearance.

Heracliteanism, then, is at least a way, and it may be the best way, to support the Protagorean Measure Doctrine, which in turn provides (the best) support for Theaetetus' definition. The universal scope of (H) and (M) shows how knowledge and perception can be the same. First (M) shrinks knowledge and all other propositional attitudes to just one, appearing/*aisthēsis*, and assigns to the agent or his perception responsibility for bringing about what there is. (H) then tells us what such a world would be like: nothing would be what it is in its own right, but rather would come to be whatever it is in relation to a reciprocal other, namely the agent who believes 'it' to be such and so.

Much work still awaits us. The argument to this point has said little about the agent or the appearance and has provided no details as to how it is that the believer comes by his beliefs, that is, how his beliefs come to have the content that they do. Given that nothing is anything in its own right, we can anticipate that the same is

true of the perceiver and his perception. It too must come to be in relation to its objects. Fleshing out the nature of the relata, as well as the notion of appearing or perceiving, is the task of the next pages of the dialogue. At 153 D 8 ff. we are given a specific instance of this relational coming-to-be. What we call 'white colour' is not itself something outside one's eyes nor in them nor at any place at all. Since nothing is one thing in its own right, each colour will appear to have come into being from the impact of the eye on an appropriate movement. What we call colour is neither that which impinges nor that which is impinged upon, but 'something which has come to be in between, peculiar to each person' (*μεταξύ τι ἑκάστῳ ἴδιον γεγονός*). This colour does not appear the same to any other creature, nor even to you yourself, since you never remain the same as yourself (154 A 9). Colour and warmth can never really belong either to the object touched or to the agent who touches, according to Protagoras.

This second presentation of (H) tells us that in each and every instance of perception, both the perceiver and what comes to be are singular and qualitatively peculiar to each interaction. Neither the world nor the perceiver is what it is in its own right. The perceiver, too, is different in every interaction or at every moment. If each perceptual property is truly peculiar (*ἴδιον*) in each interaction (154 A), two appearances could not have the same content, whether they be simultaneous perceptions of two different measures or two different appearances of what we might call the same agent.[17] Not only are different relata causally responsible for each and every appearance, but the colour or warmth, the content of the appearance, is different according to (M).

The final statement of the secret doctrine at 156, the so-called Doctrine of Twins, expands upon the causal mechanisms hinted at earlier and prepares us for the refutation at 181. Again, the initial statement is roundly universal or general: the foundational principle, *archē*, from which everything derives, is that everything is motion and that there is nothing else besides this, *τὸ πᾶν κίνησις ἦν καὶ ἄλλο παρὰ τοῦτο οὐδέν* (156 A 5).[18] Novel and somewhat troubling

[17] While this is the sentiment expressed in this passage, one could argue for a weaker interpretation from the expressions *διϊσχυρίσαιο* (154 A 3) and *ἔχεις τοῦτο ἰσχυρῶς* (154 A 7): namely, that no one agent could assert that contents are shared, though in fact there may be shared contents. See pp. 129–31 and n. 26

[18] The universality is immediately vitiated by the talk of perception, even though a broad notion of *aisthēsis* is in play, 156 B 2–7. The subsequent example of white

are the mechanisms by which the doctrine that everything is motion and relational is explicated.[19] There are kinds of motion, the active and the passive, and these in turn can be broken down into the fast and the slow. The difficulties concern these motions, which will play a critical role in the refutation at 181–3. The Twins Doctrine seems to say that everything *is motion*, whereas earlier and also at 181–3 Plato treats (H) as asserting that everything is *in* motion, i.e. moves, or changes, or is the result of changes.[20] A small palliative is the fact that the eye and the stone are slow motions, whereas the offspring, whiteness and sight, are fast motions. One apparent reason for this assignment of speeds is that the eye and the stone typically do not change places or translocate, or do so imperceptibly. In contrast, according to the metaphor at least, whiteness and sight, once they are born, move very quickly indeed, flitting back imperceptibly fast to the eye and the stone. But these slow and rapid translocations cover only one set of changes. There are two others: first, there is the birth, or coming into being, of the offspring themselves; second, after the offspring have 'travelled back' to the eye and stone, the stone becomes white and the eye becomes a seeing eye, or better, a white-stone-seeing-eye. Thus within the Twins Doctrine we find not only fast and slow motions, but also translocation and alteration, the two kinds of motions specified at 181–3. Still, it is hard to reconcile the claim that the stone and eye *are* slow motions with the earlier claim that things *are in* motion. Perhaps Plato is picking up on the motions broached at 153 E 7. Or perhaps he desires to eliminate any vestige of permanency from the relata at 152 ff. It having been asserted that nothing is anything in its own right, the addition of slow motions to the ontology suggests not

further promotes the cause of those who would limit the Heracliteanism to sensible qualities. But as the conclusion of the Twins account emphasizes, the story of the two kinds of motion is meant to cover all objects, perceivers and things alike (157 A 8–C 3). For the third time we are told that everything comes to be for something/someone, that nothing is anything in its own right. The denial (157 B 3–8) that numerous locutions are legitimate according to the Doctrine anticipates the refutation's claim that language is impossible, if everything is in flux.

[19] There is also the global question of how we are to integrate the thesis that everything is motion (H) with the Protagorean doctrine (M). It would seem that (H) is meant as an absolute truth, not something that is true just in case there is a perceiver. Of course, any doctrine purporting to be an objective truth, including (M) itself, is hard to integrate with (M). Precisely how we are to read the 'most exquisite' argument against Protagoras is outside the scope of this paper.

[20] See Bostock, *Theaetetus*, esp. 41–83.

only that the relata produce changes, but that they are themselves always changing. A third reason is that in fact whether the eye and stone are parents or offspring can only be decided on a case-by-case basis (157 A 4–7).

The case-by-case analysis is critical to the linkage between (H) and (M). The starting-point of any given analysis in terms of Twins is *a given appearance*. The content of the appearance dictates what are to be the slower motions or parents—here the eye and the stone—and what are to be the faster motions, i.e. the content of the appearance and ultimately the state of affairs it represents. Here, for example, the appearance would be 'the stone seems white (to me)'.[21] Were the explanandum the appearance of a stone, e.g. 'I believe it is a stone'—consider 'I feel a breeze'—then we should have to look for a different initial (external) slow motion from which *stoniness could come to be in the same fashion as whiteness here comes to be, and which, when translated back to a slow-motion parent, would cause 'it' to become a stone. In every case, then, the content of the appearance will be one of the twin offspring, namely the twin that moves back to the external object and produces the change in it. Its sibling will in effect be the vehicle by which this change is reported back to the agent whose appearance we are concerned to analyse. No doubt there are manifold difficulties on this account in making coherent the natures of the percipient agent and perceived objects, i.e. the slow motions stipulated to be the (internal) subject and (external) object. Some of these are developed by Plato in the ensuing pages, where he concludes that the subject of an appearance is, in the end, a mere time-slice, whose identity conditions, such as they may be, are given by the momentary appearance. By the same token, were he to press the examination of the (external) object, it too would be a time-slice, whose identity conditions are given by the same appearance. For the sake of the development of the argument, however, Plato allows us to treat both the subject and the object as an agglomeration. The former is the author of *a collection* of appearances and the latter is the aggregate of the qualities produced in the

[21] We might wish for more precision in the specification of the appearance. I do not think that the content of a Protagorean appearance is ever likely to be something like [I am appeared to white(ly)]. The eye at 156 actually plays the role of the perceiving subject and hence is equivalent to 'me' in the formulation 'the stone seems white (for me)'. The 'seems', in turn, is to be read as 'seems and is' or 'appears and is'. What a subject reports is likely to be that the stone is white. The choice of white, a colour, in effect selects the eye as the relevant sense organ.

intercourse of the parents.[22] Thus the slow motions are portrayed as the *causal* parents of the fast motions, but *ontologically* they are posterior to the perception(s) and quality(-es) of which they are comprised. The Doctrine of Twins thus completes the account of (M) and (H) begun at 151 E. The ontological and explanatory priority accorded the perceptions and qualities corresponds with the priority accorded to how things appear in the initial formulation of Protagoras' Measure Doctrine: how things appear, what I have referred to as the content of an appearance, is responsible for how things are. The theory requires that there be relata somehow causally responsible for the appearance, but nothing (more) can be said about the relata, i.e. the slow motions or parents, until after the birth of the perception and quality. To attempt to do so, e.g. to assert that they are *physical* objects whose interactions cause perceived qualities to arise which then comprise *perceptual* objects,[23] is to annul the *archē* of the Heraclitean Doctrine that nothing is anything in its own right. All that can be said is that in the case of any given appearance there will be parents, but who they are and what they will be like can be determined only by considering the given appearance whose birth we are to explain. Thus it is the twin offspring, e.g. the sight and the whiteness, who play the critical role in the Doctrine of Twins. And appropriately enough, as we shall see, they will be the target of the final refutation of the Heraclitean Doctrine at 181–3.

The Heraclitean ontology was introduced to support Protagoras' Measure Doctrine. And while (H) itself is the target of the refutation at 181–3, the close connection between (M) and (H) (179 D 2–3, 181 B 8–C 1) prompts consideration of epistemological factors in explicating the self-refuting character of (H). There are two crucial questions about Protagoras' relativism. The first is: what is the scope of Protagoras' Relativism? In keeping with my account of (H), I think that (M) also is a global doctrine. Not only perceptual properties, but all properties and particulars, are only as they seem to be. A Protagorean appearance can be about anything, including

[22] It is sometimes wondered whether the agglomeration consists of everyone's offspring or just those of one person. The worry is misplaced in so far as each subject and each object will turn out to be an instantaneous time-slice.

[23] See J. Day, 'The Theory of Perception in Plato's *Theaetetus* 152–183', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 15 (1997), 51–80, esp. 65 ff., and my 'Plato on Perception and Commons', *Classical Quarterly*, NS 40 (1990), 148–75.

other beliefs and appearances. The second question, on which I shall concentrate, is: in what respect or respects is Protagoras a relativist? Since Plato nowhere treats of this question, we shall need to consider the logical space of relativism, as exhibited explicitly or implicitly in the secondary literature. There seem to be three possibilities:

(1) Protagoras is a relativist about truth. He denies that there is any notion of absolute truth. Rather, a belief or a proposition is true-for its agent/measure.

(2) There are absolute truths. Each appearance is simply true in so far as it corresponds to a state of affairs or fact. However, each state of affairs or world is itself relative to a measure.

(3) Each appearance is relative to its author or agent. Truth remains in principle an absolute notion and similarly the state of affairs each appearance is about may or may not be relative to a measure. But each appearance, in so far as it is authored by a different measure, is relative either in that only the author has access to her appearance or in that each measure is different so that when the (common?) world interacts with each distinct agent, the *appearance* is somehow unique and relative.

(1) is a relativism of truth, (2) a relativism of worlds, (3) a relativism of agents or appearances. These accounts need not be incompatible with one another.

Let us begin from the most obscure, the notion of relative truth. Relative truth typically is understood in terms of its denial of absolute truth. There are various aspects to absolute truth, however, and depending on which aspect is emphasized, the defence of relative truth varies. The primary aspect is that absolute truth implies that there is also falsehood. Truth and falsehood always appear as a tandem. Sometimes relative truth amounts to nothing more than the denial that there is falsehood. A proponent of relative truth 'relativizes' truth so that two apparently conflicting judgements can be made by two people without yielding a contradiction. Let the judgement be 'the wind is cold': Jones believes that the wind is cold and Smith believes that the wind is not cold. Rather than declaring that one of the two beliefs must be false, this proponent of relative truth insists that 'the wind is cold' is *true-for* Jones and that 'the

wind is not cold' is *true-for* Smith. Relative truth is designed to render contradiction and falsehood impossible.[24]

Sometimes linked to absolute truth and falsehood is the availability of objective states of affairs. Objectivity is taken to imply that the state of affairs is in principle common to or interpersonally accessible to many people. Smith and Jones could have a belief about the same state of affairs. Where there are no interpersonally accessible states of affairs, a proponent of relative truth might deny that there is any sense to the notion of absolute truth and characterize the relation between an appearance and the interpersonally inaccessible state of affairs as true-relative to the agent whose appearance it is. Such an account of relative truth, which turns out to be very similar to a relativism of facts, contends that contradictions are impossible because as a matter of theory ultimately there is no belief or proposition common to Smith and Jones such that one could assert it and the other deny it. There is no common proposition or belief because beliefs are individuated by what they are about and *there is no state of affairs common to Smith and Jones.*[25] There is no state of affairs in common because each person lives in his own world. According to the radical global Heraclitean account, an individual's world ultimately consists of exactly one fact or state of affairs, what one's momentary appearance is about, and each world is numerically and qualitatively different from every other. Hence what Smith affirms and what Jones denies are actually different propositions. This proponent of relative truth might then claim that given the radical peculiarity of each world, appearances or propositions are better thought of as true-for a subject, rather than simply true.[26]

[24] An alternative is to allow that what seems to each is true absolutely. One could simply swallow the contradiction and argue that Protagoras need not have blanched at the prospect of both p and not p being true simultaneously. So S. Waterlow, 'Protagoras and Inconsistency', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 69 (1977), 19–36.

[25] In various contexts Burnyeat seems to present such an account. It is hard to pin down his view, perhaps because in different papers with different emphases he has touched on the same material in different ways. See 'Self-refutation', 181, and cf. 'Idealism', 8, 13.

[26] It is a further question whether the proponent of relative truth can allow that two individuals' beliefs can share concepts or content or whether Smith and Jones can express their beliefs in the same words. For instance, if whiteness can figure in both appearances, the appearances could be the same or at least could share concepts or properties. It is not clear whether shared contents are consistent with the respective beliefs being about different states of affairs. Supposing that the beliefs

Some opponents of relative truth draw a different moral from the thesis that there is no state of affairs common to different persons. They maintain that (2) a relativism of facts or worlds is the best account of Relativism. The Heraclitean ontology explains why all appearances are true and thus eliminates contradiction and falsehood.[27] Each person's appearance is about his own unique world and, given that appearances are individuated by what they are about, there are no appearances or propositions in common. On this reading, however, the absence of interpersonally accessible states of affairs does not entail that we must do without the notion of absolute truth. On the contrary, we can still ask after the relation between the statement uttered by Smith and his private state of affairs that it is about, and so too with Jones's utterance and Jones's world. The appearances or beliefs of each agent are simply true, even though what each is true of or corresponds to is a private Heraclitean world relative to each agent. It corresponds because the belief of the agent makes her world the way that the belief says it is or represents it as being.

In this regard, then, one can claim that Protagoras accepted an absolute or impersonal conception of truth, provided that we are careful not to think that there are truths independent of believers or judges. Hence Protagoras is right to claim that there are no false beliefs and no contradictions, not because truth is relative, but because given Protagoras' account of appearing and the underlying

share contents and that the states of affairs are qualitatively indiscernible, e.g. the appearances are both of a white stone, brings in a third defence of relative truth. The notion of relative truth could be defended on the grounds that a Protagorean appearance is *private* to the individual whose appearance it is. Regardless, then, of whether the contents or states of affairs are the same, no one can know when another's belief is true or false. Where all appearances are private, this proponent of relative truth argues, the notion of absolute or objective truth has no purchase. Hence, better to characterize each person's belief(s) as true-for-him. Cf. Burnyeat, *Theaetetus*, 42–52.

[27] Fine, in a series of papers, argues this way, citing what she calls the 'connection criterion'. Were relativism of truth sufficient to free the Protagorean from contradiction and falsehood, then there would be no need for the Heraclitean Ontology, whose purpose, as Fine sees it, is to free Protagoras from the problem of conflicting appearances. See 'Conflicting Appearances', in Gill and McCabe (eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*, 105–33; 'Protagorean Relativisms', in J. Cleary and W. Wians (eds.), *Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* (Lanham, Md., 1996), 211–43; 'Relativism and Self-refutation: Plato, Protagoras, and Burnyeat', in J. Gentzler (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford, 1998), 137–63; and 'Plato's Refutation of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*', *Apeiron*, 31 (1998), 201–34.

Heraclitean Ontology, there is correspondence in each and every case. All appearances are absolutely true.

As tempting as it is to understand Protagoras' Relativism in this fashion, I do not believe we can adopt this reading. It betrays a realist bias which Protagoras would not share and which is inconsistent with the radical Heraclitean ontology of relative worlds. For this reading presumes some vantage-point from which *one* can assess the relation between Jones's appearance and Jones's world, Smith's appearance and Smith's world, and so on. But as we saw in discussing (H), the world of a given agent is wholly inaccessible to other agents. Each world is different from agent to agent and from one moment to the next. Were I to try to gain access, as it were, were I to try to make your world the object of my appearance, whether to comment on the correspondence between your appearance and your world or so as to contradict your belief, I would bring about a different world. Oddly enough, it may be Burnyeat, the proponent of relative truth, who provides the impetus to the realist conception of truth. He argues that all Greeks of this time, Protagoras included, accept that there is an external world which all beliefs are about. 'The whittled-down physical objects have indeed no "absolute actual existence"—they exist only for the subjects which perceive them—but they are not mental things: they are not made to exist by a mind.'[28] Burnyeat here is arguing against an idealist reading (Berkeley's) of the *Theaetetus*. His point is that even the Heraclitean/Protagorean worlds are external and in some sense real, as opposed to 'mental things'. As we have seen, in some respects this is accurate. The *external relatum*, the *slow motion*, which interacts with the subject/agent to produce a perception and a quality is not a Berkeleian mental thing. On the other hand, we have also seen that it is not qualified in its own right, not even as a slow motion, which is to say that no external relatum is anything or in any way independent of a given belief or appearance. In so far as it is anything at all, it is made to be what it is by the perception. Considered apart from the analysis of a particular given *phantasia*, 'external relata' are mere posits, nods to the common Greek assumption that there is an external world. But they are just posits, much like the receptacle, completely attenuated save for possessing the capacity to interact with another object. To assert that they are qualified in any way prior to and independent of a *given appearance*

[28] 'Idealism', 13–14.

is to try to gain the same vantage-point from which the proponent of absolute truth asserts that there is correspondence between each person's beliefs and the private world the belief is about.

The temptation to claim possession of an Archimedean point is hard to resist. It is perhaps especially hard to resist in considering Protagoras' Relativism, since he seems to assert that the Measure Doctrine applies to all humans.[29] But there is a modern parallel which is especially apt when we try to get clear about Protagorean Relativism and the nature of truth in a relativistic programme. The parallel is Tarski's Semantic Conception of Truth. According to this approach, truth is always relative to a language, L_1. The basic idea in Tarski is that we cannot talk about truth in L_1 while we are in L_1. Rather, we ascend to a metalanguage, L', to talk about truth in L_1. The temptation here is to think that from the perspective of the metalanguage we can survey the variety of other languages, L_1, L_2, L_3, and so on, and the truth-predicate in each, true-in-L_1, true-in-L_2 . . . *and isolate a conception of truth common to them all.* (It is as though we can detach the 'true' from the hyphen.) But this cannot be done. There is no notion of truth simpliciter independent from some language or common to many languages. Truth is relative to a given language. In a similar fashion, the proponent of absolute truth surveys the various beliefs and worlds of different agents in search of some conception of truth common to them all. But this, too, cannot be done, if we accept (M) and (H). Still, the proponent of absolute truth might question whether within a given language the conception of truth is absolute or not. This is, despite appearances, a pseudo-question. It is not answerable within our language *per se*; rather, the question signifies that we have ascended to the metalanguage. Tarski gave us no definition of true-in-L, for variable L, but only definitions of truth-predicates for the particular languages. There is then, for the Tarskian, no way to talk about the notion of truth simpliciter, or truth independent of a language. And according to the Protagorean, there is no superior perspective to which one can ascend. For in trying to make some appearance the object of a second appearance, we only create a new world.

There is a second reason, also rooted in the Heraclitean Ontology, to be chary of allowing Protagoras an absolute conception of

[29] Implying that he can get outside of his own world to offer a theory about other perceivers and their respective worlds. Whether this is the best way to read Protagoras, or whether at bottom his is a solipsistic doctrine, is an open question.

truth. Modern scholars typically assume a distinction between subjective or relative or response-dependent properties or truths, and objective mind-independent properties, stable bearers of properties and objective truths. Most familiar, perhaps, are the primary/secondary quality distinction and the distinction between moral or aesthetic propositions where there is no fact of the matter, and scientific propositions where there is a fact of the matter. Many have suggested that the Measure Doctrine and the Heraclitean Ontology are limited to perceptual properties. These properties are then treated much like one today treats secondary qualities, as dispositional properties dependent on some perceiver or his or her experiences. Perceptual properties, and all judgements about perceptual properties, are relative.[30] While this is a possible reading of Protagoras' Measure doctrine, it is not clear that modern accounts are of much help to Protagoras. Modern accounts of dispositional properties typically claim that we are to understand what it is to *be red* in terms of what it is to *look red*. But in itself this does not entail that secondary properties are not objective, nor that they produce different experiences in different perceivers, as the secret doctrine maintains. While looking red necessarily involves the experiences of perceivers, the experiences of (looking) red need not be qualitatively different. So this appeal to secondary qualities will not help our parsing of Protagoras.

There is, however, an alternative. Suppose that the experiences of the different perceivers, or the same perceiver over time, are qualitatively distinct. (Suppose that each perceiver sees a slightly different angstrom length: Jones sees red_{141}, Smith red_{142}, Silverman red_{143}, and so on. Since there are more perceivers than available angstrom lengths, this may be physically impossible.) Given this scenario, neither the secondary quality nor the primary quality (base) is any one thing in its own right. The secondary quality is not such, since the experiential differences in each perceiver rule that out. But in these circumstances I think we cannot even say that the primary quality is one and the same. If our only access to the primary quality is through the secondary qualities that figure in perceptual experience, then there is no reason to insist that the

[30] It does not follow from the relative nature of perceptual properties or judgements that they are subjective. A subjective judgement implies at least that only the agent can access the judgement and perhaps that he cannot be mistaken about that judgement.

primary qualities are objective and public. And that access is restricted to the qualities figuring in perception seems to be precisely what Protagoras does assume. *All* contact and theorizing about the external world are mediated by perception or appearance. And if the appearances or perceptual experiences of different agents are themselves qualitatively different, then so too will be everything in the worlds of those agents.

But if every metaphysical item—particulars, primary qualities, and secondary qualities—is dependent on a Protagorean perceiver and is nothing in its own right, then there can be no contrast between subjective and objective properties or truths. Lacking this distinction, it seems to me that we also lose our grip on the notion of absolute truth. Those who would find correspondence between the appearance of a given agent and his world seem to assume both that the contents of the given appearance have their ordinary meanings or referents and that the structure of each relativistic world basically shares the structure of a stable objective world. They are entitled to neither assumption. To talk of absolute truth here is to help oneself to a stability denied by the Protagorean and Heraclitean. Perhaps this is reason to opt for the ill-defined and ill-understood notion of relative truth when trying to capture the relation between a Protagorean appearance and the Heraclitean world to which it is related and which it creates. It signals our inability to make sense of the notion of truth when everything is subjective, relative, and ephemeral.

Protagoras' Relativism turns on the relativism of facts, the relativism of each world to the agent whose world it is. In one sense, the relativism of worlds is made possible by the Heraclitean Ontology, which denies that anything is what it is in its own right and affirms that each and every thing or property comes to be with respect to some reciprocal item. But the driving force behind Protagoras' Relativism is this reciprocal item, the Protagorean Measure, or rather his *phantasia*, which is responsible for the numerical and qualitative uniqueness of each world. To keep with the thrust of the Heraclitean Ontology, we have to abandon the notion that either the external object or its primary and secondary qualities are common to different appearances. And equally we have to abandon the notion that there is some stable and constant agent, with a sensory apparatus that is affected in determinate ways by the (impinging) motions from the external object. Both the perceptual field of the

agent and the object and its properties are altered by each activity of perceiving.

If the agent, or rather his *phantasia*, is the source of the uniqueness of his world, what are we to say about the contents of his appearance and the qualities and objects of his world? Suppose that it appears to me that the wind is warm. This state of affairs constitutes my world and hence this appearance is true for me. This state of affairs is peculiar to me in that my appearance alone brings it about. Now it also seems that this state of affairs is such that only I can have access to it, because only I have access to my judgement that brings it about. It has seemed to many readers, however, that nothing in principle prevents two individuals from bringing into being the same state of affairs, provided that appearances and their correlative states of affairs are analysed in terms of the constituents of the appearances.[31] (If analysed in terms of causal origins, each appearance would be different since each is caused by a different perceiver.) Setting aside the issue of how Protagorean agents have the wherewithal to produce (the contents of their) judgements, no one can say whether there is anything common to the judgements of 'what we call' the same agent or common to the judgements of different agents. Nothing prohibits the auditory capacities, for example, of two agents from being identical, nor does it seem impossible that two external objects, even though they be conceived along Heraclitean lines, are qualitatively identical and interacting with two different agents. Finally, it even seems likely, if not an explicit commitment of the Doctrine of Twins, that the interaction between different agents and different objects could produce the same offspring, i.e. whiteness and seeing. If this is possible, then the same objects or properties could figure into different appearances and, hence, into the different worlds.[32]

Reflection on the possibility of common contents and common qualities and particulars of worlds brings us to the critical fork in the road. If we grant the possibility of shared contents, e.g. warmth and whiteness, then we must look elsewhere for the bite of Protagorean Relativism. This might turn out to be the privileged access that each agent has to his own appearance and his own world. Each

[31] See n. 26.

[32] Once again we cannot know this. It is a comment on the theory, launched from the same external perspective from which one comments on the (absolute) truth of each person's appearance.

agent still brings into being the state of affairs which constitutes his world, but nothing prevents the appearances from sharing contents and hence worlds from sharing qualities. And every judgement will still be true for its agent because his judgement still makes his world be the way he takes it to be. However, only the responsible agent will be able to say authoritatively what his appearance and his world are like. And this is all he can say! He, and we, are incapable of knowing whether contents and qualities are shared. Since each appearance is private to its author, there is no possibility that someone else, or even the so-called same agent, could show another's belief to be false. If the refutation at 181 refutes this sort of Protagorean-cum-Heraclitean position, we shall have to show that this radical privacy is somehow incompatible with some aspect of appearance or belief.

This, I think, is a tack taken by Burnyeat, among others. Exploration of its implications would require another paper. However, I do not think that privacy is the issue. Rather, I believe that Plato wants to saddle the Protagorean with the denial that different appearances can share contents or that worlds can share qualities and particulars. He has to deny that there are shared contents lest he violate the Heraclitean doctrine, for, as Plato *will* argue, the sharing of contents, qualities, and particulars would require that properties and perceptions be exempt from change. But Plato thinks that they too must be included. We cannot set aside how a Protagorean agent comes by the contents of his judgements and the constituents of his world. If the refutation at 181 refutes this Protagorean-cum Heraclitean position, it will have to show that Protagorean appearances and Heraclitean worlds are incapable of having any contents and thus aren't appearances or worlds at all. The question, then, is what aspect of Heracliteanism is responsible for this lack of contents?

2. Self-refutation arguments

(*a*) *Overview*

The argument at 181 B 8–183 C 4 is generally agreed to have the form of a self-refutation. Its target is the theory of total instability or flux ascribed to certain Heracliteans. This theory is allegedly self-refuting because it entails that language is impossible; we move from the premiss that there is total flux to a conclusion that language

is impossible, and from there to the conclusion that it is not the case that there is total flux. Whatever the exact form of this argument, it is not that of an absolute self-refutation of the form $(p > -p) > -p$. That is to say, the proposition 'Everything is in flux' is not itself absolutely self-refuting. Consider a classic example of an absolutely self-refuting proposition such as 'It can be proved that nothing can be proved.'[33] If we can speak of the content of the proposition, we can say that in cases of absolute self-refutation, the content of the proposition *itself* is contradictory. The Heraclitean doctrine is not absolutely self-refuting because we do not derive the conclusion that there is not total flux simply from the premiss that there is total flux. We need the aid of additional premisses. The fact that Plato uses the additional premiss that language is impossible signals that he is appealing to what is now known as an operational self-refutation. Generally speaking, a claim is operationally self-refuting if there is *no way* it can be presented that does not ultimately conflict with the claim itself. Since there is no way to present the proposition, an operational self-refutation is more powerful than a pragmatic self-refutation, where the content of the proposition and *the specific manner* in which it is presented are in conflict, e.g. writing that one is not writing. Let me equate presenting the claim with coherently asserting it. We can then say that if the coherent assertion of a specific claim involves asserting something or presupposing some condition which conflicts with the claim itself, then the claim is operationally self-refuting. It does not follow that what I am calling the content of the claim is false, let alone necessarily false. An operational self-refutation shows only that it cannot be coherently asserted. Just as in the case of a pragmatic self-refutation I might not be writing, though I cannot write this, so too it may be the case that there are no intelligible sentences or no language. That there is language and that there are intelligible sentences are contingent matters, although intuitively we feel that such

[33] See J. L. Mackie, 'Self-refutation: A Formal Analysis', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 14 (1964), 193–203. Obviously the proposition [It can be proved that nothing can be proved] is complex. Mackie labels phrases such as 'It can be proved that' 'proposition-forming operators' and proceeds to detail a variety of self-refutations depending on the strength and character of these various operators. The absolute quality of this self-refutation arises from the conflict between the peculiar operator and the proposition operated upon. 'Everything is in flux' obviously is not a complex proposition. See also J. A. Passmore, *Philosophical Reasoning* (London, 1961), ch. 4.

a claim is self-refuting because it violates the very (pre)conditions for language or assertion.[34]

An operational self-refutation imposes limits on discourse because it determines the ways in which one's saying or asserting something implicitly commits one to being prepared to say something else.[35] Since the argument at 181–3 is an operational self-refutation, our task is to isolate the conditions for meaningful discourse apparently violated by the Heraclitean. What is special about this argument is that it is an overtly *metaphysical* thesis that generates the apparent incompatibility. What precondition for language or assertion is violated by the claim that everything is in flux? Or better, what entailments does that thesis commit its proponents to that ultimately result in the collapse of language? The answer to these questions varies, of course, with what we think flux is, what we take to be subject to flux, what we think is a precondition of meaningful discourse, and, last but not least, what we believe the arguments within the dialogue demand or permit.

(*b*) *The argument at 181 B 8–183 C 4*

Having developed the Heraclitean and Protagorean Doctrine in defence of Theaetetus' first definition, Socrates begins his evaluation of them at 160 E. There follows a series of objections and counter-arguments directed primarily at the Measure Doctrine, including the famous self-refutation of Protagoras at 170 A ff., arguments concerning beliefs about the future and evaluative notions at 171 D ff. and 177 C, and the historically influential digression on the philosopher and the common person at 172 C–177 C. At 179 C Socrates allows that despite the preceding arguments, perhaps it is true that Man is the measure of his own 'immediate present experience . . . which gives rise to perceptions and perceptual judgments' (Levett translation of τὸ παρὸν ἑκάστῳ πάθος, ἐξ ὧν αἱ αἰσθήσεις καὶ αἱ κατὰ

[34] Although we have powerful intuitions concerning some conditions of discourse, I know of no proof that any candidate is a necessary condition. See Barry Stroud, 'Transcendental Arguments', *Journal of Philosophy*, 65 (1968), 241–56.

[35] We can extend the notion of operational self-refutation by specifying the kind of discourse engaged in: for instance, when we are asked to regard a thesis as self-refuting because it cannot be presented in dialectical debate or accepted by rational agents. On the epistemic and metaphysical variants of self-refutation see George Myro, 'Aspects of Acceptability', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 62 (1981), 107–17; Sally Haslanger, 'Ontology and Pragmatic Paradox', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 92/3 (1992), 293–313.

ταύτας δόξαι γίγνονται (179 C 3–4).)[36] In order to come to grips with this possibility, Socrates proposes to test 'this moving Being', τὴν φερομένην ταύτην οὐσίαν, 179 D 3, the first principle, ἀρχή, 179 E 1, of the doctrine. The stage direction takes us back to the initial formulation at 151 D 2 ff. and the Twins Doctrine of 156 A. As we saw, however, there were subtle differences in these formulations. The initial formulation of the secret doctrine emphasized that nothing is anything in its own right, and proscribed usage of the verb 'to be' and its cognates. The formulation of the *archē* at 156, on the other hand, had it that everything is motion, a thesis appropriately encapsulated by the expression 'moving Being', provided again that one read nothing into 'Being'. When Socrates finally begins the refutation, however, he formulates the first principle more in the fashion of 151 than 156: 'What are they talking about when they say that all things are in motion?' (181 C 1–2).

On the face of it, there are three distinct theses, each of which has a claim to be the foundation of the secret doctrine:

(1) Nothing is anything in its own right.
(2) Everything is motion.
(3) Everything is in motion.

Though one can interpret these theses so that they turn out to be different from or even inconsistent with one another, it is more charitable to make them 'come to the same thing' (160 D). (2) is the outlier and, since it does not figure in the refutation, is best viewed as a thesis created to serve the special needs of the account of perception developed in the Doctrine of Twins (see above, pp. 119–21).

[36] McDowell, *Theaetetus*, ad loc., translates 'each person's present experience, from which there come to be his perceptions and the judgments which conform to them'. I am wary of reading much into the distinction between perception and perceptual judgements, despite the fact that we are discussing judgements concerning special sensibles. We have little notion of what this experience could be outside of the Twins analysis. Moreover, it is hard to say what, in the case of immediate perceptual judgements, differentiates experience from the perception and either from the perceptual judgement. I take McDowell's 'which conform to them', which is κατὰ ταύτας in the text, to signal how he thinks perceptions and perceptual judgements are related. Given my reading of (M) and (H), there is little to distinguish the perception and the judgement. As for the experience, it seems that could only refer to what happens to the eye, the slow motion, when the offspring (the perception) moves back to it. In so far as it becomes a seeing-eye, I think this differs not at all from saying that it makes a perceptual judgement. This is not to say that we cannot develop differences between the three, especially by viewing the experience as something that happens in the eye or to the eye, e.g. changes to the rods and cones. For a different reading see Burnyeat, *Theaetetus*.

The difficulty is in reconciling (1) and (3). If we read 'Everything is in motion' with restricted scope, we are liable to think that it implies that each and every thing changes its properties over time. What is in motion or changing will be the *properties of things*: the wall, for instance, will be changing from red to green to yellow, depending on the object or agent with which it mixes (152 D 7). This reading of (3) is incompatible with (1), since it leaves open the possibility that the particular bearers of properties and the properties or property types are what they are in their own right.[37] If (3) and (1) are to be consistent with one another, either (3) should be read with the widest scope or (1) should be limited to a particular's exchange of properties.

How are we to choose? The answer to this question must lie in the refutation itself. I believe that language will turn out to be impossible only if we take the broad reading of (1) and (3): everything is in change, particulars, their properties, and the properties themselves. Conversely, I think that if we limit (H) to the exchanges of the properties of things, without conceding that the bearers themselves or the property types themselves change, then Plato cannot show that language is impossible on the assumption that everything changes. And I think that Plato sees this too.

The argument at 181 B 8–183 C 4 begins from the supposition that everything moves and flows, *κινεῖται καὶ ῥεῖ, ὥς φατε, τὰ πάντα* (182 C 3–4). Its conclusion is that those asserting this *λόγος* must posit a different language, because (their) current language is inconsistent with their account, except perhaps in a most attenuated form. The ultimate aim of the argument is not so much the destruction of the Heraclitean metaphysic as the rejection of Theaetetus' first answer that knowledge is *aisthēsis*. This conclusion is reached by showing that if everything is in flux, then knowledge is no more *aisthēsis* than not *aisthēsis*, because *nothing* is any more what it is than not: 'what has really emerged is that, if all things are in motion, every answer, on whatever subject, is equally correct, both "it is thus" and "it is not thus"' (183 A 4–6). If everything is in flux, then the proponents cannot say that everything is in flux and mean by that

[37] Conversely, the fact that nothing is anything in its own right can be read in a manner which permits things to have stability. If we read (1) as the denial of essentialism, for instance, it does not follow that items will be changing every one of their properties at every moment. Particulars could endure through time and even retain a large number of properties over time. All that would be required is that there is no property which they are precluded from losing.

claim what they think or want it to mean. For if everything is in flux, then 'Everything is in flux' no more means that everything is in flux than that it is not the case that everything is in flux (or than anything else).

Since this is an operational self-refutation, we shall need to secure the missing premisses or presuppositions which connect the metaphysical thesis with the linguistic, or more broadly, epistemological operation which proves to be impossible, given the truth of the metaphysical thesis. But in order to determine what these presuppositions are, we must first specify the natures of both the metaphysical thesis and the linguistic operation. Since we have almost no handle on Plato's conception of the conditions governing meaningful assertion, we must use our understanding of the metaphysical thesis to 'bootstrap' our way to some understanding of the conditions which the metaphysical thesis violates. There are two broad lines of interpretation of the metaphysical thesis, each of which purports to show that language or meaningful assertion is impossible.

According to what I shall call 'the particularist interpretation', what are in flux are all particulars. A particular is in flux if it simultaneously has contrary or contradictory properties.[38] The reason that language is impossible if particulars are in flux is that the subject terms used by the Heracliteans to state facts about particulars, e.g. that the wall in front of me is and is not white, cannot secure reference to the wall or any particular, because the particulars violate the law of non-contradiction. The argument has something like the following form, on this line of reasoning:[39]

(1) Everything is in flux.
(2) If everything is in flux, then for any object, x, and for any predicate, F, x is F and not-F.

[38] This is not the only version of the particularist interpretation. Rather, it is the version designed to show how one reaches the conclusion that language is impossible from metaphysical principles. For another, see below, pp. 144–6.

[39] None of the commentaries or books sets out this, or any, argument in detail. Cooper's discursive discussion comes closest, but he seems to me to shift later in his chapter away from the claim that particulars violate the law of non-contradiction to something resembling a successionist line. In fairness to Cooper, the passages are all drawn from his 1967 dissertation, a document which may or may not accurately represent what he now believes. The argument offered above reflects, I think, a fairly common way of approaching the section. It is no doubt coloured by scholarly attention to Aristotle's treatment of the topic in *Metaphysics Γ*. See Cooper, *Theaetetus*, 88–117; McDowell, *Theaetetus*, ad loc.

(3) If everything is F and not-F, then everything violates the law of non-contradiction.
(4) If everything is in flux, then everything violates the law of non-contradiction.
(5) Words have significance only where the law of non-contradiction holds.
(6) If everything is in flux, then words have no significance.
(7) If words have no significance, then language is impossible.
(8) If everything is in flux, then language is impossible.

First, let us consider how our understanding of the second premiss, what it is to be in flux, might influence our assessment of the (im)possibility of significant speech, i.e. premiss 5. The domain of flux, the substituenda for x, are the material particulars of the everyday world.[40] We get from the flux of everyday particulars to the impossibility of language through the unavailability of particular subjects to speak about. Because every particular instances both F and not-F, for any property F, we cannot identify or say anything definite about particulars. The assumption underlying this argument is that to say anything of some subject, to identify some subject, we must say something definite about the subject, where by 'definite' we mean that we must exclude at least one other predicate, the contrary of what is said about it.[41] On this reading, then, we need to assume that language is possible only if we can assert sentences of subject–predicate form, where the subject terms refer to ordinary particulars.[42]

This way of understanding the argument treats predicates and

[40] And all of their properties: Owen,'Place', 73; so too Cooper, *Theaetetus*, and, with reservations, McDowell, *Theaetetus*. We can narrow the range by arguing that the concern is simply with perceptual properties.

[41] 'What he plainly points out is that if anything (and anything in this world, not the next) were perpetually changing in all respects, so that at no time could it be described as being so-and-so, then nothing could be said of it at all—and, *inter alia*, it could not said to be changing': 'Place', 72. Owen does not say how he conceives of the relation between flux, indescribability, and meaningfulness. He seems to argue that if we cannot say something definite about some particular, then we cannot engage in meaningful discourse. Since every particular is in flux, we can never say anything definite about anything. Hence language is impossible.

[42] I am uncertain whether Owen thinks that in order for there to be meaningful discourse we must be able to identify and classify (describe) particulars, or perhaps that identifying particulars presupposes that they have essential properties. He seems to leave no room for the possibility of direct reference to particulars, or of the use of demonstratives to secure reference to them. At the very least, he seems to me to be committed to the asymmetry of names and predicates discussed above.

names differently. While it allows us to use predicate expressions simply to refer to or designate properties, e.g. '*F*' and 'not-*F*', it denies that we can refer to particulars simply by using a proper name or even a demonstrative. More importantly, it seems to assume that speakers have ready access to a stock of predicate expressions (with definite meanings) with which we *could* speak about particulars, if they did not exhibit properties in the way they do. If this is so, then in order to infer the impossibility of language, we must ignore the possibility of a language of demonstratives and predicates, where we locate recurring features in a spatio-temporal grid.[43] In addition, we must ignore the possibility of a language consisting solely of analytic statements detailing the relations between properties. Finally, the particularist ignores the possibility of interpreting Heraclitean flux as the thesis that for any particular *x* and property *F*, *x* is *neither F nor* not-*F*.

Such a Heraclitean would not only help himself to meaningful predicates, he would have to (sw)allow bare particulars. Still, its possibility militates against the particularist view. Maybe bare particulars are impossible, or maybe a feature-placing language—'This is watery' or 'Water here'—or a language whose sole domain is properties and their relations cannot be coherently conceived. If this is so, it is not obviously so. And each seems to be a possible interpretation of Plato's own view of the relation between language and what there is. So long, then, as it is open to the Heraclitean to employ predicates, he cannot be convicted of refuting himself. An exclusive focus on particulars in violation of the law of non-contradiction blinds one to the argument's conclusion. It does not entail the impossibility of language.[44]

The alternative or 'Formist' reading understands the range of 'everything' to be both particulars and properties. Cornford, in setting out his interpretation, at first restricts the objects in flux to the objects of perception.[45] He soon adds the perceptions them-

[43] See my 'Timaean Particulars', *Classical Quarterly*, NS 42 (1992), 87–113, for a defence of such a language.

[44] Although most particularist interpreters help themselves to predicates, there is a line of reasoning that leads from particulars in flux to the impossibility of language. Since every property is supposed to be coinstantiated with its contrary in any particular to which it belongs, one might think that no predicate does have a definite sense. One might try to show that we cannot conceive of a property unless we have a clear, isolated instance of it in this world, or that we cannot conceive of any property if the properties occurring in this world are all coinstantiated with their contraries.

[45] Cornford, *Knowledge*, 97.

selves and then notes that while the content of perception might always be changing, seeing still remains seeing. This leads to the conclusion that the particularists find so odious:

> The extreme Heraclitean cannot make this reply. It would mean that my perception, changing in content, remains the same in so far as it always has the character of being perception and knowledge. But the Heraclitean says that nothing ever remains the same. Plato's point is that, if 'all things' without exception are always changing, language can have no fixed meaning (99) . . . The upshot of this section is that Plato disentangled the application of the flux doctrine to sensible things, which he accepts, from the unrestricted assertion, 'All things whatsoever are in change', which he rejects. The conclusion would be more obvious, if it were not his plan to exclude mention of the Forms—the things which are not in change and can be known. (101)

For the moment let us set aside the issue of whether Plato accepts the flux of particulars. If the range of flux includes all processes, properties, and particulars, there is no room for treating names and predicates differently. There will be no name or predicate that refers to or signifies its respective kind of referent. To this extent, it is the most plausible of the interpretations, since it does not require additional assumptions about statements, as opposed to names and predicates. The Formist interpretation, therefore, does not assume that we can use predicates to characterize particulars (or place features in space) or that we can identify any properties at all. Since properties are themselves in flux, we cannot say anything definite about a particular, or construct a feature-placing language or a language consisting of analytic statements detailing relations between properties. In the absence of stable or fixed meanings for our predicates, language of any sort is impossible.

Both interpretations accept that all things or all properties are both *F* and not-*F* because they are changing. The text certifies that the various forms of perception, hearing, seeing, etc., and the different perceptual qualities, whiteness, bitterness, etc., are under attack. The argument begins with Socrates distinguishing two kinds of motion, change of place or turning around in the same place, 181 C 6–7, and alteration, or change from one quality to another, 181 C 9–D 3. (In the first passage an indefinite subject, *ti*, moves or revolves. In the second the indefinite subject is understood: something grows old or comes to be black from white.) Socrates' next step is to insist that when the Heracliteans say that everything

moves, *τὰ πάντα κινεῖσθαι*, 181 D 9, they must be taken to mean that each moves in both respects, lest it be no more correct to say that everything moves than that everything is at rest (181 D 7–E 7). The conclusion of the first stage of the argument adds further emphasis to the global reach of the doctrine: *all* things are *always* in every kind of motion (182 A 1).

The second stage pointedly returns us to the Doctrine of Twins. Socrates asks about the coming into being of whiteness and heat, repeating the ontology of 156:

> the genesis of things such as warmth and whiteness occurs when each of them is moving, together with a perception, in the space between the active and passive factors: the passive factor thereby becoming percipient, but not a perception, while the active factor becomes such or such, but not a quality—isn't that so? But perhaps 'quality' seems a strange word to you; perhaps you don't quite understand it as a general expression. So I will talk about particular cases. What I mean is that the active factor becomes not warmth or whiteness, but warm and white; and so on. You will remember, perhaps, that we said in the earlier stages of the argument that there is nothing which in itself is just one thing; and that this applies also to the active and passive factors. It is by association of the two with one another that they generate perceptions and the things perceived; and in so doing, the active factor becomes such and such, while the passive factor becomes percipient.[46] (182 A 3–B 7, trans. Levett)

The final remark is somewhat unclear and anacolouthic.[47] The active and passive factors in coming together give birth to qualities and perceptions and in virtue of these offspring returning to the factors these factors become percipient and qualified. Thus either the things perceived at 182 B 5–6 are the qualities, or Socrates is here eliding the process so as to advance to the second change involving the quality, i.e. the alteration of the active factor, e.g. the stone becoming white at 156 E, into a thing perceived. The role of these offspring is highlighted by the introduction into the philosophical vocabulary of the very notion of quality, *ποιότης*. Things become white because whiteness, born from the intercourse of the

[46] Since what is active and what is passive can vary in any given case, one should read the assignment of the active factor to the external object and the passive to the eye appropriately. However, in so far as Protagoras' Measure Doctrine assigns priority to the agent, it may be more appropriate in general to make the eye, i.e. the agent, the active factor.

[47] *ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἄλληλα συγγιγνομένων τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἀποτίκτοντα τὰ μέν ποι' ἄττα γίγνεσθαι, τὰ δὲ αἰσθανόμενα.*

two parent factors, changes the active factor, causing it to become something white. With its reiteration of the thesis that nothing is what it is in its own right, we are free to consider none of the four elements in the account as stable. Whatever else the Heracliteans may say, Socrates' only concern is their thesis that *everything* moves and flows (182 C 1–4).

The penultimate stage of the argument begins with the reassertion that everything suffers both types of change. Socrates points out that were the moving things, *τὰ φερόμενα*, not to alter, then we would be able to say of what sort they are (182 C 9–11). Looking back at 182 A 3 ff., the *φερόμενα* were the whiteness and the perception. But we cannot be certain of the reference of this expression here, and the difficulties only increase as the argument progresses.

But since not even this abides, that what flows flows white;[48] but rather it is in the process of change, so that there is flux of this very thing also, the whiteness, and it is passing over into another colour, lest it be convicted of standing still in this respect—since that is so, is it possible to give any name to a colour which will apply properly to it?

ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦτο μένει, τὸ λευκὸν ῥεῖν τὸ ῥέον, ἀλλὰ μεταβάλλει, ὥστε καὶ αὐτοῦ τούτου εἶναι ῥοήν, τῆς λευκότητος, καὶ μεταβολὴν εἰς ἄλλην χρόαν, ἵνα μὴ ἁλῷ ταύτῃ μένον, ἆρά ποτε οἷόν τέ τι προσειπεῖν χρῶμα, ὥστε καὶ ὀρθῶς προσαγορεύειν; (182 D 1–5)

There are at least two sources of controversy in this critical passage. The first is the translation and meaning of the phrase *τὸ λευκὸν ῥεῖν τὸ ῥέον*. As translated by Levett, it seems that what does not abide is a *fact*. But it is unclear how we are to account for the change in or of the fact. The expression *τὸ ῥέον* gives us the subject, namely 'the flowing thing', and, as translated by Levett—correctly, I think—*λευκόν* seems to be a predicate adjective (not an attributive adjective, i.e. *'that the white flowing thing flows'). Yet the next sentence emphasizes that what changes or flows here is the whiteness; *it* changes into another colour. As a result, it is impossible correctly to call anything a colour. It does not say that it is impossible correctly to call anything *coloured*. And since nowhere in this passage is there mention of a particular changing from white to some other colour, it is reasonable to conclude that however we are to parse the substantive clause, the flowing thing is *the offspring*

[48] Cornford, *Knowledge*, 98: 'the flowing thing does not flow white but changes'; McDowell, *Theaetetus*, 62: 'that the flowing thing flows white'.

whiteness. Whiteness changes and its change precludes it, or anything, from flowing white. What this means must be understood from the context of the Twins Doctrine. We have seen that in moving or flowing back to the external object, here considered to be the active element, whiteness causes that object to become white. Since this offspring itself is now said to be subject to flux, to alter from white to some other colour in the course of its movement back to the external object, it can no longer be the cause of the object's becoming white. Indeed, since it, or any of its kind, cannot correctly be called any colour, the external object also cannot be said to *become* or be *coloured*. But this fact about the external object can only be inferred from this passage.[49]

In the examination of the Measure and Heraclitean Doctrines, we saw that the offspring, the perceptions and the qualities, were ontologically prior to the parents or slow motions in that the parents turned out to be agglomerations of perceptions and qualities. This ontological priority helped to explain both (H) why the parents could not be considered anything in their own right, and (M) how it could be that a belief or appearance could be responsible for the state of affairs to which it corresponded. We saw that there were no so-called parents apart from or prior to the given appearance which was to be analysed in terms of the Doctrine of Twins. In principle, an external object was a mere posit. According to the Doctrine of Twins, the change affecting the external parent, the stone or log becoming white, was secondary and posterior to the birth of the offspring. Given the explanatory and ontological priority accorded the perception and the quality, and given that there is no external particular in its own right apart from what is posited as creating the offspring and being changed by it, the change of whiteness in play at 182 is not that of some particular's remaining white or changing to another colour. The target is the quality itself, the whiteness, which is ontologically responsible for the being/becoming of the particular and explanatorily responsible for whatever change it undergoes.

Granting that the focus of the argument is the perceptual *qualities*, a second source of controversy concerns whether that which is described as changing at 182 D 1–3 is the abstract property, whiteness, or a token instance of it, this-whiteness-here-and-now. Formists are inclined to treat the qualities as abstract, or at least to include

[49] Of modern commentators, McDowell, *Theaetetus*, 182–4, also concludes that it is the whiteness itself which flows; cf. Bostock, *Theaetetus*, 99–110.

the abstract qualities along with their instances, for it is the abstract qualities that serve as the fixed meanings of predicates. A particularist is liable to view this as an objectionable first step on the path to the (illicit) introduction of Forms into the argument. Particularists will insist that the whiteness, heat, etc. are 'fleeting instances of warmth, whiteness, etc., which come-to-be between patient and agent; they are phenomenal and sensible qualities, not abstract at all. They are what one sees and not what one sees is an instance of. They correspond to momentary sense-data and not to the qualities which sense-data exhibit.' [50] The trouble is not, say the particularists, that the abstract qualities are changing to other qualities. The trouble is that instances, say of whiteness, do not remain an instance of whiteness for any time: 'no change can be a change to white if there succeeds a change to yellow or green without the whiteness having lasted for any period of time however brief'.[51]

In general, we distinguish the abstract property, whiteness, from its instances, e.g. the-white-in-my-shirt, and both the property and the property instance from the particular shirt that is white.[52] At times it seems as though the change of the whiteness itself is the change of the shirt from white to yellow. But the change of the particular is posterior to the birth of the offspring and, besides, this is neither what is described here nor would it be a change in the offspring itself. The question, then, is whether the quality, e.g. whiteness, is a property instance or the property itself. According to the Doctrine of Twins, the perceptual qualities are offspring which move between the parents and cause changes in the parents. As such, they are not abstract. They are also unique, *ἑκάστῳ ἴδιον γεγονός* (154 A 2), in so far as a given offspring can arise only from the intercourse of the active and passive (slow) motions which give it life (157 A).

It sounds odd to our ears to say either that a property type or that a token of a type changes from being whiteness to being not-whiteness, or from being this instance of whiteness to being this instance of not-whiteness. Properties themselves cannot change their properties. Moreover, it is odd to think of property instances which are not instances of some type. Provided that we do not import particular bearers of properties into the account, and provided that

[50] Cooper, *Theaetetus*, 104. [51] Ibid. 105.

[52] It is unclear to me from the quote whether Cooper is claiming that the particular bearer of the instance or the instance itself fails to remain an instance of whiteness.

we do not postulate that the type remains stable while the instances change, I do not see that the distinction between a property type and tokens of that type makes a difference to Plato's argument. For if either every property instance of *F*, or the type *F* Itself, changes and is both *F* and not-*F*, then the predicate '*F*' can have no definite sense and particulars can neither become nor be said to become anything at all.

The concern over the status of the properties, as well as the role of the particulars in the refutation, arises naturally from those aspects of the argument that suggest that the problem for the Heraclitean is the rapid succession or exchange of properties. It has proved difficult, however, to show why language would collapse as a result of such exchanges, no matter how rapid they may be. Thus defenders of the particularist interpretation might look elsewhere than the metaphysics of the Heraclitean doctrine for support, namely to the conditions that underwrite classification or meaningful assertion and judgement.[53] If one thinks that the qualities here are property instances and treats flux, i.e. the 'flow' of these instances, as the rapid succession of the properties of the particular, one might then try to derive the impossibility of language by arguing that the presupposition linking the metaphysics to language concerns the speaker's inability to *verify* any of his assertions. According to this approach (I shall call it 'S'), the key claim in the argument is Theodorus' remark at 182 D 6–7, just after Socrates asks whether it is possible correctly to give the name of a colour to anything on the assumption that the white itself changes: 'I don't see how one could, Socrates; nor yet surely to anything else of that kind, if, being in flux, it is always quietly slipping away as you speak?' (Levett's translation of *καὶ τίς μηχανή, ὦ Σώκρατες; ἢ ἄλλο γέ τι τῶν τοιούτων, εἴπερ ἀεὶ λέγοντος ἐπεξέρχεται ἅτε δὴ ῥέον;*). The critical notion, on S's reading, is that even while we are saying (or thinking) that something is white, the colour of the *object* changes—it quietly slips away. The problem, then, is that the instability or flux of sensibles is so fast that either (S(*a*)) we are unable to classify an instance as falling under some standard, i.e. as being an instance of a given abstract quality, or (S(*b*)) as we say or think that the shirt is white, the shirt changes colour so that we cannot determine whether what we say is true or not. Indeed, since it changes from

[53] Cooper's talk (*Theaetetus*, 105) of the impossibility of 'classifying' particulars suggests this approach, as do Burnyeat's remarks on this passage (*Theaetetus*, 42–52).

white to green and then to red with such blinding speed we can just as well assert that it is any colour as assert that it is white.

While the verificationist tenor of (S) may strike some as anachronistic, flux as succession of properties is a plausible construe of the notion. Moreover, (S) has some purchase in the argument against the Heraclitean. We have seen its like before in the second account of Protagoras' Relativism, which relativized the states of affairs or facts but admitted absolute truth (above, pp. 125–7). Each exchange of properties would be its own state of affairs, equivalent to a relativized world for an agent, in the one case a speaker and in the other a perceiver. Both the Successionist and the Relativist of Fact accounts accept that truth is absolute. In the case of the Relativist, every momentary perception/appearance is (absolutely) true of its world. For the Successionist, the statement is either absolutely true *or false*. For the mere fact that flux, i.e. the change of properties, is occurring faster than we can think or speak does not show that there is *no time* when something is white and not not-white. There are, he will allow, objective truth conditions out in the world, which 'make' our statements true or false. It is just that we can never know or determine when something is (was) as we say it is, because the change of qualities exceeds our powers of observation.[54]

And so, the (S)uccessionist will continue, while it may be true that a given thing is either white or not-white, we have no more *reason to believe* that it is white than reason to believe it is not-white. Therefore, we have no more reason to claim that anything is any more what it is than what it is not, including that knowledge is perception rather than not perception. The fact that we cannot verify any claim because the rapidity of change outstrips our (sensory) capacities shows that we lack *justification* for anything that we might assert. And that is why Plato writes that any claim about any subject is equally correct, ὁμοίως ὀρθή (183 A 6). In fact, if the Protagorean/Heraclitean has no reason to say or believe of anything, x, and any property, F, that x is F rather than not-F, nothing will seem to him to be in some way at all. As the Successsionist reads this argument, any answer and no answer are equally appropriate and inevitable outcomes.

Those wary of the introduction of verificationism would have much to say about the epistemological assumptions undergirding

[54] Cf. Fine, 'Protagorean Relativisms', and 'Plato's Refutation of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*'. Fine has published no account of 181–3.

this line of reasoning. Regardless, however, of the nature of the epistemic assumptions, the chief difficulty with this interpretation is that it does not adequately explain Plato's assertion that language is impossible or that the words uttered by the Heracliteans cannot mean what they want them to mean. The precondition for language violated by Heraclitean flux, according to the Successionist, is that we must have reason to believe that what we assert corresponds with some fact in the world. But even were we to concede that such a condition is violated in the case of assertions about particulars having or lacking properties, and even if we were to concede that *ὀρθή* ('correct') could mean 'justified', this lack of justification does not explain why every answer, about any subject, is equally *correct*, if all things are in motion in the way specified by the Successionist.

> A fine way this turns out to be of making our answer right. We were most anxious to prove that all things are in motion, in order to make that answer come out correct; but what has really emerged is that, if all things are in motion, every answer, on whatever subject, is equally correct, both 'it is thus' and 'it is not thus' [*πᾶσα ἀπόκρισις, περὶ ὅτου ἄν τις ἀποκρίνηται, ὁμοίως ὀρθὴ εἶναι, οὕτω τ' ἔχειν φάναι καὶ μὴ οὕτω*]—or if you like 'becomes', as we don't want to use any expressions which will bring our friends to a stand-still.' (183 A 2–7, trans. Levett)

Moreover, our inability to verify statements about changing particulars does not render what we say *meaningless*. Our words and statements have perfectly determinate (and objective) meanings and truth conditions. The correct thing to say is the assertion that corresponds to the facts, even if we cannot determine which assertion that is.

Nor will it do to claim that language is impossible because in the time it takes to utter a statement the pertinent state of affairs changes so that we cannot determine whether the statement is true. First, this interpretation assumes that we can somehow distinguish one state of affairs from another. We have the resources to say 'something definite' about particulars and properties, which is to say that our predicates at least have a definite meaning (see above, p. 137). If so, then while we may not be able to say anything about what present state of affairs obtains, nothing precludes our speaking about the past and future. It also remains open to the Heraclitean to speak about (token instances of) property types following and preceding one another, although he cannot determine which objects

currently exhibit them. And since he can understand the meaning of the predicates, a Heraclitean could use his language to speak about property types and the relations between them. The Successionist interpretations thus fail to account for the impossibility of language and compound this by insisting, without any obvious warrant, that language is impossible unless we can verify *when* what we say is true or false. The succession of qualities will not support the claim that either the particulars or the properties themselves violate the law of non-contradiction. Without such a violation I suspect that we cannot make sense of Plato's claim that 'it is thus' and 'it is not thus' is true of everything, nor ground the impossibility of language.

The Heraclitean Doctrine was introduced to explain what the world must be like if everything is to be such as it seems to each Protagorean measure. Its foundation is the thesis that nothing is an *auto kath' auto* being, i.e. nothing is anything in its own right. The Heraclitean calls into question *all* properties *at once*. In Plato's eyes, this is a denial of Forms, those *auto kath' auto* beings in virtue of participation in which all particulars come to possess whatever qualities they have. Hence, without *auto kath' auto* beings, it was to be expected that particulars could not be qualified in any way. Considered from the epistemological or linguistic perspective, the stability of Forms allowed predicates to have a fixed meaning,[55] and one could then use these predicates to (attempt to) identify and classify particulars by appealing to the properties they exhibit. Hence, without *auto kath' auto* beings, it was to be expected that predicates would lack meaning and that particulars would turn out to be indescribable.

Plato's strategy is thus to allow the Heraclitean to replace 'being' systematically with 'becoming'. He then contends that, if Heracliteanism is universal, we cannot say that there is any quality which anything can become, i.e. acquire, however transiently. For if the quality itself or the quality instance is itself F and not-F, then any supposed subject, in becoming, say, white, also becomes not-white. The strategic focus on the qualities is particularly effective against the Heracliteanism of the Twins Doctrine. The quality, born from the intercourse of the parents, returns to the external object and

[55] Irwin,'Heracliteanism', 2, in discussing the end of the *Cratylus*, notes that 'the argument needs only a hypothetical concession to the Heracliteans; even if all particulars are in flux, words must refer to the same things on different occasions, or we could not even describe change in the world'. Indeed, I think that we could not describe the world at all.

'causes' it to become, for instance, a white stick. If this quality is both white and not-white, then the stick cannot become anything definite.[56]

The reintroduction of *aisthēsis* at 182 D 8 ff. lends additional support to the contention that properties themselves, as opposed to the particulars which are affected by the qualities, are the focus of Plato's attack. Sight, for example, is the twin of whiteness, as opposed to the eye or the eye filled with vision. If sight itself is subject to flux, i.e. is no more sight than not, then there is no way that the eye, by becoming filled by sight, could become a seeing-eye, which is to say that no perception or any perceptual judgement could come from it (see pp. 120–2 and n. 21): it could not be the agent of any appearance. Just as the quality is explanatorily responsible for the coming-to-be of the white stone and ontologically responsible for the stone being a parent, so too the perception is explanatorily responsible for the coming-to-be of the *phantasia* of the stone's being (or seeming) white and logically responsible for the Protagorean measure—here the eye—being the parent or author of the appearance. Since it was this sequence of changes which allowed for the identification of *aisthēsis* with knowledge, the flux of the twins renders *aisthēsis* no more knowledge than not knowledge.

According to the Heraclitean, everything whatsoever is subject to flux. This is the sense of the prohibition against the use of 'so' and 'not so' (183 A 10–B 1) and of the remark that every answer, concerning whatever subject (183 A 5 *πᾶσα ἀπόκρισις, περὶ ὅτου ἄν τις ἀποκρίνηται*), is equally correct. The source of flux is the offspring generated from the intercourse of the slow motions which, in turn, cause these slow motions to become an appearance, on the internal or agent-centred side of the relation, and an object qualified in accord with the appearance, on the external or object-centred side

[56] Plato's intuition is that constant change, i.e. becoming, is intelligible only against the backdrop of Forms or stable properties. One cannot understand what it would be to change from *F* to *G* or from *F* to not-*F*, unless there were some prior understanding of what *F*, *G*, or not-*F* is. Each quality, or Form, would therefore have to be stable in that it could not change at all. Lacking any conception of stable properties, change would be undifferentiable and hence no more change than rest. If qualities are stable in this fashion, then the possibility of the colour, i.e. the whiteness, changing by becoming over time some other colour would be precluded. The attack on the qualities themselves also defuses another objection. What, it might be said, is so problematic about a particular's being or becoming both *F* and not-*F*? Provided that we understand what *F* is and what not-*F* is, provided, that is, that we can identify *F* and not-*F*, language still seems possible, though particulars may be in trouble. Cf. Irwin, 'Heracliteanism', 7.

of the relation. Of the twin offspring the property is primary, I have argued, because it furnishes the content of the appearance and thus the 'change' in the object itself. This is not to deny that the parents, the slow motions, are not temporally prior in the Twins account. But nothing can be said or known about these parents prior to the generation of their offspring, not even that they are parents. The Heraclitean's commitment to the thesis that nothing is anything in its own right entails that even what typically are thought to be agents or objects may themselves, depending on circumstance, turn out to be offspring. Hence once these offspring are shown to be unstable, nothing in the Heraclitean world can come to be characterized in any way, including the parent agent and object and the appearances which arise from the interactions of agents and objects. Words have no purchase and thought no reference at all.

But Plato, almost as a postscript, does seem to allow the Heracliteans some highly limited means of expression. Having directed them to contrive a new way of speaking because the present-day language is inconsistent with their theory, he adds 'unless it would perhaps suit them best to use "not at all thus" in a quite indefinite sense' (trans. Levett), *εἰ μὴ ἄρα τὸ οὐδ' οὕτως μάλιστα δ' οὕτως ἂν αὐτοῖς ἁρμόττοι, ἄπειρον λεγόμενον* (183 B 4–5). Since Plato has just said that 'not so' is closed to them, and since the text is corrupt, it is difficult to say what Plato has in mind. McDowell conjectured that perhaps the point is that Socrates is changing his mind about 'not so': 'To say how things are not is not to say anything definite as to how things are; consequently one can concede the possibility of saying how things are not without conceding the possibility of saying how things are' (*Theaetetus*, 182). Although McDowell's point seems to me to be true in general, I do not think that the Heraclitean can be permitted even this. The problem is that even though *we* say nothing definite about how things are when we say how they are not, we still say something definite, namely, that things are not *this way*. But this is tantamount to allowing the Heraclitean the notion of determinate, definite content, if only to use it negatively. For Heracliteans there is nothing definite or fixed, and therefore there is nothing definite that they, speaking in their own voice, can even negate or deny. If the Heraclitean cannot negate or say anything even in an indefinite manner, then perhaps *ἄπειρον λεγόμενον* is best translated 'said indefinitely'. All that is left to the Heraclitean is to *respond* 'not (even) so' countlessly many times to predicates offered

up *by someone else*, i.e. for however long and however many possibilities are offered up by the enquirer: 'Is it red?'—H: 'Not (even) so.' The fact that οὕτως borrows its referent from what the interlocutor says reinforces Plato's point. He has just precluded (183 A 9–B 1) the Heraclitean from saying 'so' or 'not so', for instance '(It is) not red', since 'not red' would mean something fixed and definite for both him and his interlocutor. Now he is pointing out that all the Heraclitean can do is indicate to another speaker that it is not *whatever the speaker means* to ask about. He cannot even be said to be attempting to negate what the speaker means by 'red', say, because that would mean that there is some stable meaning that he understands himself to be asked about. Lacking any language of his own, he is simply robot-like in responding 'not so' to whatever is put to him.[57]

That the Heraclitean cannot say anything in his own right points to the strength of the operational self-refutation. It will be recalled that in operational self-refutations the target proposition is not shown to be false, or necessarily false, but simply unpresentable. Everything may be in flux, although the Heraclitean cannot maintain his metaphysical commitments and assert his theory. However, in successfully prosecuting this operational self-refutation, Plato does foreclose a gambit that has seemed to some to be available to the Heraclitean, namely, attempting to exclude his theory (λόγος) from the general instability. One might offer as an analogy a Protagorean who might claim that all truths are relative, except the truth that all truth is relative.[58] But one can exclude a theory from its own domain only if one can formulate it. The Protagorean can do so, and although it may be an *ad hoc* exclusion and inexplicable why just one truth is not relative, nothing precludes him from promulgating this position. Not so with the flux doctrine. If there are

[57] Perhaps he can't even do that, if responding to a question is itself part of a language game. Cf. C. Wright, 'Does Philosophical Investigations I. 258–60 Suggest a Cogent Argument against Private Language?', in J. McDowell and P. Pettit (eds.), *Subject, Thought, and Context* (Oxford, 1986), 209–66 at 228 n. 11: 'What will follow, if Wittgenstein is correct, is not, strictly, that private language is impossible, but that it cannot provide a medium for the formulation of genuine statements, commands, questions, wishes, the framing of hypotheses, or any kind of speech act which presupposes the availability in the language of the means for depicting genuine states of affairs. It is a further question whether anything so impoverished as to lack all expressive resources could qualify as a language (perhaps a private language apt only for the expression of expletives would still be a possibility).'

[58] Tony Long raised this point in conversation.

no predicates or properties, if 'flux' cannot mean flux, or anything else either, then it is impossible for the Heraclitean to formulate any thesis. So, he cannot formulate even the exclusion of his thesis.

'*Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines!* . . . If everything were in continual flux, and nothing maintained itself fixed for all time, there would no longer be any possibility of getting to know anything about the world and everything would be plunged into confusion.'[59] Frege's sentiment was shared by Plato. What is wanted is stability of content, the determinate boundaries of properties that cannot change at all. What remained fixed for all time for Plato were the Forms. The demise of the Heraclitean doctrine of total instability is the result of his inability to express his doctrine. Plato does not show that it is false or impossible. Rather, he 'proves' that the theory is untenable because it cannot be coherently put forward as an account of the world. It cannot be coherently offered as an account, because his words or concepts which are needed to express it have no meaning and, since meaning and reference are merged here, nothing to refer to. This is not because particulars are in flux or violate the law of non-contradiction, but because there are no properties to permit the theorist even to express the respects in which they do violate the law of non-contradiction. Now, we cannot immediately infer from this refutation that Forms are required for language or thought. (Indeed, all that we can legitimately infer is that something is not in motion in both respects. No one, however, thinks that so weak a conclusion is what Plato is after.) But the chain of inferences is not hard to make out. The problem with the flux doctrine is its *archē*, the assumption that nothing is anything in its own right. Since Plato is now in a position to deny this, though only on the assumption that language and thought are possible (because actual!), we can infer that something is what it is in its own right. It was open to Plato to finger the particulars of the physical world as (some of) what is what it is in its own right, but he consistently fails to do this. Certainly in the middle-period works, and I would argue in the critical and later-period works, Forms and Forms alone enjoy this sobriquet.[60] This is not to deny that some stability is afforded particulars in these later dialogues.

[59] G. Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*, trans. J. L. Austin (Evanston, 1980), vii[e].

[60] *Pace* Owen, 'Place', I do not think that *Theaet.* 184–6 or *Phileb.* 59 says anything different.

(And I would argue some stability was always accorded them.) But it is possible to be stable, i.e. to escape from radical flux or be free from violation of the law of non-contradiction, without being what one is in one's own right. Particulars, then, are stable, but are what they are in virtue of their relation to Forms. Since Forms are properties for Plato, *onta* that are what they are in their own right, abstract entities in virtue of participating in which particulars come to be identifiable and describable, the conclusion that there must be Forms does in fact follow from the refutation of the Heracliteans. In this regard, the operational self-refutation points out yet again Plato's firm commitment to his own version of metaphysical realism and his intuition that language and thought can be saved only by appeal to the resources of what he thinks of as metaphysics. The Protagorean, with his Heraclitean Ontology, relies on the resources of the mind first to furnish determinate content to his appearances and then to flesh out the states of affairs to which the appearances correspond. The arguments of the *Theaetetus*, and especially the refutation at 181–3, show that thought and language, or the human mind on its own, are incapable of bringing about meaning or truth, because the mind alone cannot create the stability needed for the successful use of thought and language. It is this metaphysical fixity or stability that is the essential precondition in Plato's drama of the relation between epistemology and metaphysics.

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ARISTOTELIAN DIALECTIC AND THE DISCOVERY OF TRUTH

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1. Introduction

THE main aim of this paper is to determine how, if at all, dialectic is able to lead to the establishment of true conclusions. Before giving a more detailed summary, I shall explain what Aristotelian dialectic is.

Dialectic is introduced in *Topics* 1. 1 as 'a method by which we shall be able to reason from *endoxa*[1] about any problem set before us and shall ourselves, when sustaining an argument, avoid saying anything contradictory' (100^{a}18–21).[2] Dialectic, we are told, is about any problem. It is concerned with subjects which require no specialized knowledge and is based on things 'which it is in a certain way common to everyone to know' (*Rhet.* 1354^{a}1–6). This general characterization is, however, qualified at *Topics*, 1. 10 and 11, where we find out that subjects which are, or should be, manifest to everyone or to most people are unsuitable for dialectical debates: a man who doubts whether snow is white is to be supposed to lack perception; a man who proposes to discuss whether to love one's parents or whether to honour gods deserves punishment and not refutation (105^{a}5–7). A dialectical problem must pose some doubts or difficulties in order to afford scope for discussion.

Another limitation on the scope of dialectic is that it does not deal with specific issues we are often concerned with in our everyday

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[1] For the translation of *endoxa* see n. 4.

[2] Unless specified otherwise, quotations in this paper are from the *Topics*. I use either the Loeb edition by E. S. Forster (Harvard, 1960) or R. Smith's translation in *Aristotle:* Topics, *Books I and VIII* (Oxford, 1997) with occasional modifications.

lives. Its interest lies solely, as Brunschwig describes it, in timeless generalizations.[3] To be more exact, it is concerned with so-called 'predicables': accident, genus, property, and definition. A dialectical problem about genus can be, for example, 'Is animal the genus of man, or not?'; a dialectical problem about definition might be 'Is "pedestrian biped animal" a definition of man, or not?' ($101^{b}32$–3).

From the opening sentence of the *Topics* ($100^{a}18$–21) we also find out that dialectic is a two-way method. On the one hand, it is a method of reasoning from *endoxa*,[4] and on the other, it is a method of sustaining an argument without saying anything contradictory.

[3] J. Brunschwig, 'Aristotle on Arguments without Winners or Losers' ['Arguments'], *Wissenschaftskolleg Jahrbuch* (Berlin, 1984–5), 31–40 at 32.

[4] The Greek word *endoxa* has been translated in various ways,e.g. as 'generally accepted opinions' by Forster, the Loeb translator of the *Topics*; 'accepted premises' by Brunschwig, 'Arguments'; 'commonly held beliefs' or 'common sense' by T. H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* [*First Principles*] (Cambridge, 1988); 'noted or accredited beliefs' by R. Bolton, 'The Epistemological Basis of Aristotelian Dialectic' ['Epistemological Basis'], in D. Devereux and P. Pellegrin (eds.), *Biologie, logique et metaphysique chez Aristote* [*Biologie*] (Paris, 1990), 185–236; 'deeply unproblematic beliefs' by C. D. C. Reeve, 'Dialectic and Philosophy in Aristotle' ['Dialectic'], in J. Gentzler (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford, 1998), 227–52. The most convincing considerations on the translation are, I think, provided by J. Barnes ('Aristotle and the Methods of Ethics', in *Revue internationale de la philosophie*, 34 (1980), 490–511 at 498–500) and D. Devereux ('Comments on Robert Bolton's "The Epistemological Basis of Aristotelian Dialectic"' ['Comments on Bolton'], in Devereux and Pellegrin, *Biologie*, 263–86 at 266–7). According to the latter, *endoxa* are best translated as 'plausible views'; according to the former as 'reputable views'. The advantage of Barnes's translation, and his main reason for proposing it, is that it keeps the original meaning of the adjective *endoxos*, which is 'of good repute'. However, there are some passages where Devereux's translation seems more appropriate. For example, in 8. 5 ($159^{b}23$–35) Aristotle distinguishes between that which is *endoxon* absolutely (*ἁπλῶς*), *endoxon* according to some philosopher, and *endoxon* according to the answerer himself. And it seems that the latter (a view which is *endoxon* according to the answerer himself) does not have to be necessarily 'reputable'; it may be a view which merely seems plausible to him. Similarly, it seems that the opposite of *endoxon*—*adoxon*—does not have to be a disreputable view; it can merely be an implausible view. Barnes himself, as Devereux notices, translates '*adoxos*' as 'implausible' (in the Revised Oxford Translation: e.g. 8. 5). Hence it seems that, depending on the context, the word *endoxa* can be translated as 'reputable' and/or 'plausible' views. Some *endoxa* are reputable and plausible views, some are reputable (e.g. held by a well-known philosopher) but not necessarily plausible (e.g. Heraclitus' view that good and evil are the same thing: $159^{b}30$–1), and one can conceive of *endoxa* which are plausible according to some answerer (or even a distinguished philosopher) but not necessarily reputable. What is most important is that *endoxa* are such views (reputable and/or plausible) which, as Devereux remarks, the answerer could reasonably be expected to accept in a discussion or which it would be unreasonable for him to refuse to accept (see Devereux for examples of passages in which this is made most apparent). Brunschwig's translation of *endoxa* as 'accepted premises' reflects best this feature of *endoxa*.

These two roles are fulfilled by two persons: the former role belongs to the questioner, the latter to the answerer.

After the problem of the dialectical debate is set out ('*p* or not-*p*') and the answerer has decided which thesis he undertakes to defend (e.g. '*p*'), the role of the questioner is to build a dialectical syllogism (1) whose premisses are *endoxa* and (2) which proves the view opposite to that of the answerer ('not-*p*').

The premisses of a dialectical syllogism are not laid down by the questioner himself; they have to be constructed out of the answerer's responses. The questioner needs to put the premisses he wants to secure in the form of questions. The form of questions has to be such as to allow the answerer to say 'yes' or 'no'.[5] So the questioner must not ask, for example, 'What is the genus of man?' but rather 'Is animal the genus of man or not?'[6] The answerer's role is to submit to the questioner's argument from *endoxa*—deny or accept a premiss—without saying anything contradictory.[7]

The aims of dialectic are presented in 1. 2. We are told that besides mental training and conversations, dialectic is useful for philosophic sciences (*πρὸς τὰς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιστήμας*), since if we are able 'to raise difficulties on both sides, we shall more easily discern both truth and falsehood on every point'. Further, Aristotle claims, dialectic 'is useful with regard to the first principles in each science [*πρὸς τὰ πρῶτα τῶν περὶ ἑκάστην ἐπιστήμην*]. For it is impossible to discuss [the first principles] at all from the principles proper to the science in question, since the principles are primary in relation to everything else, and it is necessary to discuss them through *endoxa* [*διὰ τῶν ἐνδόξων*] about them.' Aristotle adds: 'This process belongs peculiarly, or most appropriately, to dialectic; for since it examines, it provides a way towards the principles of all lines of enquiry.'

Whether dialectic is able to lead to the discovery of truths has been much disputed. Some scholars consider the way Aristotle examines *endoxa* in his physical, metaphysical, ethical, and other

[5] e.g. 158^{a}15–17. 8. 7 describes what the answerer should do if a question does not allow a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. For example, if the question is not clear or has more than one meaning, instead of conceding or denying it, the answerer can say that he does not understand it. If the question is clear but has more than one meaning, the answerer should concede only what is true.

[6] e.g. 101^{b}29–39, 158^{a}14–24.

[7] Dialectical debates took place with a circle of listeners (e.g. 158^{a}8–11) who, it is plausible to think, enforced the rules governing them.

writings and argue that dialectic is his own method of enquiry towards truths.[8] Some distinguish various types of dialectic and claim that it is by virtue of one of them that one is able to arrive at truths.[9] Some contend that dialectic, although itself not sufficient, is a useful tool towards knowledge.[10] Some emphasize the importance of 8. 1 of the *Topics*, where competitive tricks which aim to deceive and puzzle the opponent are described, and claim that dialectic is a competitive[11] or even eristic game,[12] designed to help one to win an argument rather than to discover the truth. Others stress the common task the participants of the dialectical discussion have to fulfil and argue that dialectic is co-operative and not agonistic.[13]

My interpretation of dialectic differs from all the above in that it emphasizes, and stems from recognizing, the importance of what I call the Overarching Principle (OP) described in 8. 5 and 6. The OP is the most important rule of the dialectical debate: the dialectical syllogism has to proceed from the more to the less knowable. In Section 2 I argue for the co-operative nature of dialectic by pointing out that the OP has to be followed not only by the questioner but by the answerer as well. In Section 3 I argue, however, that dialectic is also a competitive game: as long as the dialecticians co-operate in observing the OP and other rules of the dialectical debate, they can trick, deceive, and compete with each other as much as they

[8] This view was inaugurated by G. E. L. Owen ('*Tithenai ta phainomena*', in S. Mansion (ed.), *Aristote et les problèmes de méthode* (Louvain, 1961), 83–103, repr. in J. Barnes, M. Schofield, and R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle*, i. *Science* (London, 1975), 113–26, and in G. E. L. Owen (ed.), *Logic, Science, and Dialectic* (London, 1986), 239–51) and adopted by other scholars. For example, M. Frede (*Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford, 1987), 87) writes: 'as with all other sciences, one arrives at [the] starting points [of metaphysics] dialectically'. See also M. C. Nussbaum, 'Saving Aristotle's Appearances', in M. Schofield and M. C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Language and Logos: Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G. E. L. Owen* (Cambridge, 1982), 267–93.

[9] This role, although differently, is played by 'strong dialectic' according to Irwin, *First Principles*, and by 'peirastic dialectic' according to Bolton, 'Epistemological Basis'.

[10] Reeve, 'Dialectic', e.g. 244–6; Smith, *Topics*, e.g. pp. xviii–xx, 53–4.

[11] e.g. P. Moraux, 'La joute dialectique d'après le huitième livre des *Topiques*', in G. E. L. Owen (ed.), *Aristotle on Dialectic: The* Topics. *Proceedings of the Third Symposium Aristotelicum* (Oxford, 1968), 277–312.

[12] G. Grote, *Aristotle* (London, 1883), e.g. 268, 397, 399.

[13] Brunschwig, 'Arguments', e.g. 37. According to him, dialectic has 'no serious concern for truth' (34) and its philosophical function (mentioned in 1. 2) is not 'prominent in the *Topics*, to say the least' (40). Devereux ('Comments on Bolton', 286) writes: 'there is no evidence in the *Topics* and *SR* for a special form of dialectic to be used in philosophical or scientific investigations'.

wish. In Section 4 I examine in more detail the behaviour of the co-operative answerer whose task is to judge what is best for the dialectical argument and to concede accordingly. In Section 5 I consider the significance of the OP. I argue that the dialecticians observe this rule and co-operate in finding the strongest argument possible because that is useful for deciding what is true. I also investigate the commonplaces (*topoi*) about definitions (one kind of Aristotelian first principle) and consider other methods Aristotle offers for the discovery of first principles in his other writings in order to demonstrate in what way it is possible to establish definitions in dialectic.

2. Dialectic as co-operative (I)

In a dialectical discussion the questioner's aim is to establish the thesis which is opposite to the answerer's ($159^{b}5$–6). When the answerer's thesis is *endoxon*, the questioner's will be *adoxon*, and vice versa ($159^{b}4$–5). If the answerer's thesis is neither *endoxon* nor *adoxon*, the questioner's conclusion will also be of this nature ($159^{b}6$–7). The questioner and the answerer have opposite tasks of establishing opposite theses. However, they are not allowed to pursue their goals in any way they like. They are both constrained by rules, one of which will be investigated in this section.[14]

The questioner's aim is to build a dialectical syllogism out of premisses which are granted to him by the answerer. We found out from the opening statement of the *Topics* ($100^{a}18$–21) that the premisses of the dialectical syllogism need to be *endoxa*. This introductory statement is not, however, as Aristotle specifies, exact but only in outline ($101^{a}18$–24). In 8. 5 the requirements for the questioner's premisses are set out in more detail: they must be more *endoxa* (and hence more knowable) than the conclusion: a dialectician 'who reasons well [ὁ καλῶς συλλογιζόμενος] demonstrates his proposition from premisses which are more *endoxa* [ἐνδοξοτέρων]

[14] Other rules are described in 8. 11 ($161^{b}19$–33), where we find out that an argument is open to criticism (1) if the conclusion does not follow from the premisses; (2) if the argument is not applicable to the thesis; (3) if the argument were to proceed as a result of certain additional premisses or (4) certain suppressions; and (5) if the argument were to proceed from premisses which, though true, require more labour to demonstrate than the problem. In 8. 12 ($162^{b}2$–15) we are told when the argument is fallacious.

and more knowable [*γνωριμωτέρων*]' (159^{b}8–9). Those who do not argue in this way are criticized in 8. 6: 'Those who attempt to reason from premisses which are more *adoxa* than the conclusion obviously do not reason well [*οὐ καλῶς συλλογίζεσθαι*]' (160^{a}14–16); and in 8. 11: the argument in itself is open to criticism (161^{b}19) 'if the reasoning were to proceed from premisses which are more *adoxa* [*ἀδοξοτέρων*] and less convincing [*ἧττον πιστῶν*] than the conclusion' (161^{b}30–1). I call this rule which ensures that the argument proceeds from the more knowable the Overarching Principle (OP). Below, I argue, on the basis of 8. 5, that the OP governs not only the questioner's reasoning but also the answerer's responses.

In 8. 5 Aristotle envisages three situations: (1) when the answerer's thesis is *adoxon* and the questioner's conclusion *endoxon* (159^{b}9–16); (2) when the answerer's thesis is *endoxon* and the questioner's conclusion *adoxon* (159^{b}16–20); and (3) when the answerer's thesis is neither *endoxon* nor *adoxon* and the questioner's conclusion is of the same nature (159^{b}20–3).

(1) In the first situation, Aristotle advises the answerer *not* to grant (*οὐ δοτέον τῷ ἀποκρινομένῳ*)[15]

(A1) that which does not seem true (*ὃ μὴ δοκεῖ*); that is, that which is *adoxon*,[16]

[15] *δοτέον* + dative is ambiguous: the dative can be translated as either subject or object. Hence the whole phrase can mean either (*a*) that the answerer (dative as subject) must not grant X; or (*b*) that the questioner must not pose X to the answerer (dative as object). According to (*a*), situation 1 (and 8. 5) is about dialectical rules for the answerer; according to (*b*), situation 1 (and 8. 5) is about the rules for the questioner. Two such interpretations are also possible in situations 2 and 3. In situation 2 Aristotle advises *θετέον τὰ δοκοῦντα*, which can mean either (*a*) that the answerer must concede X, or (*b*) that the questioner must pose X. In situation 3 Aristotle advises *δοτέον τὰ φαινόμενα*, which can mean either (*a*) that the answerer must grant X, or (*b*) that the questioner must pose X (to the answerer). Usually (e.g. in the Loeb translation) it is assumed that translation (*a*) is correct and hence that the situations describe not the rules for the questioner (which are presented in 8. 1–3) but the rules under which the answerer should concede. Such an interpretation is suggested by the way Aristotle introduces the three situations: '[since] . . . no formal rules have yet been laid down as to the aim which *the answerer* ought to seek and what sort of things he must concede and what not . . . let us try to say something ourselves on the subject' (159^{a}34–7); and the way he summarizes 8. 5: 'It is now clear what should be the aims of *the answerer*' (159^{b}36). The three situations in 8. 5 are then, no doubt, about what the answerer should concede. However, let us note that (*b*) is consistent with (*a*) because, as we shall see in this section, what the answerer should concede is in fact equivalent to what the questioner should pose for conceding.

[16] That the phrase *ὃ μὴ δοκεῖ* can be thought of as equivalent to *adoxon* is clear

or

(B1) that which seems true but less than the conclusion (*ὃ δοκεῖ μὲν ἧττον δὲ τοῦ συμπεράσματος δοκεῖ*); that is, that which is *endoxon* but less *endoxon* than the conclusion.

In other words, the answerer should concede, as Aristotle goes on to say (159^{b}13–14), those premisses which are *endoxa* and more *endoxa* (*μᾶλλον ἔνδοξα*) than the conclusion; that is, he has to follow the same principle as the questioner—the OP. On the basis of situation 1, it is clear that the answerer's task is the same as the questioner's and that it is to make sure that the dialectical argument proceeds in accordance with the OP. Indeed, Aristotle adds explicitly that the syllogism should be built in such a way if the less knowable (*ἧττον γνώριμον*) is to be reached through the more knowable (*διὰ τῶν γνωριμωτέρων*) (159^{b}14–15).

(2) In the second situation the answerer's thesis is *endoxon* and the questioner's conclusion *adoxon*. Aristotle advocates that the answerer should concede (*θετέον*):

(A2) things which seem true (*τὰ δοκοῦντα*),

and

(B2) of things which do not seem true (*τῶν μὴ δοκούντων*), those which are less *adoxa* than the conclusion (*ὅσα ἧττόν ἐστιν ἄδοξα τοῦ συμπεράσματος*).

(B2) comes as a surprise and for several reasons. (*a*) Why would Aristotle advise the answerer to concede *adoxa*? (*b*) Why would the questioner pose *adoxa* in the first place? (*c*) Is not Aristotle's advice in (B2) contrary to the opening statement of the *Topics*, where we were told that the questioner's premisses must be *endoxa*?[17] Let

from the context of 8. 5 and in particular from the next statement (159^{b}13–14) cited below (in the main text).

[17] Similar questions are posed by situation 3, in which Aristotle advocates that the answerer must grant: (A3) things which seem true (*τὰ φαινόμενα*) and (B3) of things which do not seem true (*τῶν μὴ δοκούντων*) things which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion (*ὅσα μᾶλλον ἔνδοξα τοῦ συμπεράσματος*). (B3) is puzzling already on the level of translation. Since *endoxa* are defined as 'things which seem true [*τὰ δοκοῦντα*] (to all or to the majority)' (100^{b}21–3), in (B3) Aristotle advocates that the answerer should concede 'of things which are not *endoxa*, things which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion'. How can that which is *not endoxon* nevertheless be more *endoxon* than the conclusion? The solution to this puzzle lies, I think, in noticing that the term *endoxon* is a matter of degree. *Endoxon* and *adoxon* are the

us try to answer question (*b*) first: why would the questioner pose *adoxa*?

The only plausible answer I can think of is the following: in situation 2 the conclusion the questioner argues for is *adoxon*. He can argue for it, as envisaged in situation 2, in two different ways. Ideally he could try to secure premisses which are *endoxa*. For example, the questioner may try to build the following syllogism:

(1) Drinking excessively makes one forget about one's worries.
(2) Forgetting about one's worries is healthy.
∴ (3) Drinking excessively is healthy.

In this syllogism the conclusion is *adoxon* (it is neither a plausible nor a reputable view that drinking excessively is healthy) but it is achieved by positing premisses which are plausible.

One can imagine, however, that the questioner's task in situation 2 is more difficult than envisaged above. He may be asked to argue for a conclusion which is so *adoxon* that in order to achieve it he has to secure some adoxic premisses: it may be that there are not any endoxic ones which would guarantee his conclusion. For example, he may be asked to argue for the totally adoxic conclusion that chain-smoking is healthy. Then he may try to build the following syllogism:

(1) Chain-smoking is relaxing.
(2) Relaxing is healthy.
∴ (3) Chain-smoking is healthy.

Whereas the second premiss in this syllogism is *endoxon*, the first one is not. It is dubious and disreputable (even in the eyes of a smoker) to state that chain-smoking is relaxing. Nevertheless, it is

converse of each other, like large and small: for example, house X is not large but is nevertheless larger than house Y. Similarly, some view may be not *endoxon* (it may not seem plausible and/or reputable at all), but in comparison to a certain conclusion it may still be more *endoxon* (more plausible and/or reputable) than the conclusion. (B3) poses the same questions (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) as (B2): e.g. (*a*) why does Aristotle advise the answerer to concede some premiss which is not *endoxon*; (*b*) why would the questioner pose such a premiss at all? etc. The answers to these questions are equivalent for both situations 2 and 3, although I pursue them on the basis of situation 2 alone.

less dubious (and less *adoxon*) than the totally absurd (and totally *adoxon*) conclusion that chain-smoking is healthy.

Aristotle advises one to avoid arguing for the view which is *adoxon* (8. 9, 160^b17–22). However, in a special situation where the questioner is confronted with such a task, and it is impossible to find any endoxic premisses, he is allowed to pose premisses which are *adoxa*, provided that they are less *adoxa* than the conclusion, since only by virtue of such premisses will he be able to build his syllogism and reach his adoxic conclusion. This, I think, is the answer to question (*b*).

But to return to question (*a*), why does Aristotle advise the answerer to concede *adoxa*? This seems to be against the answerer's interest: his own thesis is *endoxon*, and if he concedes premisses which are *adoxa*, the questioner may manage to prove his adoxic conclusion. The answerer is told, however, to concede the adoxic premisses—he is not supposed to hinder the questioner's task in this regard.[18] This suggests that the answerer Aristotle envisages in 8. 5 is a co-operative one whose primary aim is not victory over the questioner but following and investigating the argument together with the questioner. Having realized the difficulty of the questioner's task, the answerer should not prevent the questioner's reasoning by refusing to concede the only premisses the questioner is able to find for his adoxic conclusion. And not only does the answerer have to concede *adoxa*, but he also has to make sure that these adoxic premisses are less *adoxa* than the conclusion. This means that (1) the answerer has to follow the OP and (2) since he knows the questioner's conclusion from the outset, the answerer has to judge the nature of the premisses in the light of the conclusion—he has to judge what is more *endoxon* (more plausible and/or more reputable) than the conclusion. This confirms my earlier contention that it is not his victory in the argument that the answerer is most interested in but rather guarding the argument so that it is explored in the best possible and most convincing way.

Another conclusion which emerges on the basis of the interpretations of situations (2) and (3) is that some premisses of the dialectical argument do not have to be *endoxa*. They have to be, however, as in situation 1, more *endoxa*—i.e. less *adoxa*—than the

[18] He can, however, hinder the questioner's task in other ways, which will be considered in sect. 3.

conclusion.[19] Only in this way will the dialectical argument be built in accordance with the OP.

Such an interpretation confirms that the essence of the OP is not that the premisses of a dialectical syllogism have to be *endoxa* but solely that (even if they are not *endoxa*) they should be more *endoxa* than the conclusion. The possibility of adoxic premisses seems to be one of the reasons why Aristotle says at the end of 1. 1 (101^{a}18–24) that his introductory remarks about dialectic are not exact but only an outline. This qualification saves him from the charge of inconsistency between the opening statement of the *Topics* (100^{a}18–21), where we are told that the premisses of a dialectical syllogism must be *endoxa*, and 8. 5, where we find out that sometimes, in special situations (which are best avoided), some premisses do not have to be of such a nature.[20] Hence it is possible to answer question (*c*) negatively.

In this section it has been shown that a dialectical discussion should be pursued in accordance with the OP and that this is the responsibility not only of the questioner but of the answerer as well. Chapter 8. 6 introduces other features of a co-operative answerer. But before interpreting it, I shall consider whether dialectic is competitive.

3. Dialectic as competitive

In 8. 1 Aristotle describes the tricks the questioner could use in order to conceal the conclusion he is arguing for. The questioner is

[19] In situation 3 we are told explicitly that the premisses which are not *endoxa* have to be more *endoxa* than the conclusion. In situation 2 we are told that the premisses which are *adoxa* should be less *adoxa* than the conclusion, which is equivalent to saying that they should be more endoxic (more plausible and/or more reputable) than the conclusion.

[20] Note that even in these special situations where one employs adoxic premisses, one should try to find the best—most plausible and convincing—ones in favour of a given thesis. At 161^{b}34–8 Aristotle says that 'One ought not to demand that the reasoning of every problem should be equally plausible [ἐνδόξους] and convincing [πιθανούς]; for it is an immediate result of the nature of things that some subjects of enquiry are easier and some more difficult, so if a man carries his conviction by means of views which are most *endoxa* [μάλιστα ἐνδόξων], he has argued well.' Note that the μάλιστα ἔνδοξα do not have to be *endoxa*. They can be those *adoxa* which are the most plausible and/or reputable ones in comparison to other adoxic views in favour of a given conclusion in a similar way to situation 3, where a view which is not *endoxon* may still be more *endoxon* than the conclusion (see n. 17).

recommended to begin as far as possible from his thesis ($155^{b}29$–30); to put his questions in a designedly incoherent and unintelligible order so that the answerer is not able to foresee the conclusion ($156^{a}24$–6); to pretend that he is stating the proposition not for its own sake but for the sake of something else because the answerer is careful about things which are useful for the thesis ($156^{b}4$–5); to 'leave it obscure whether he wishes to establish what he is really proposing or its opposite' ($156^{b}6$–7), and to adorn his arguments with various distinctions which are not necessary for the conclusion ($157^{a}6$–13).

The questioner is further advised to throw the respondent off his guard by occasionally making objections against himself in order to create the impression that he is playing fair, 'for answerers are unsuspicious when dealing with those who appear to them to be arguing fairly' ($156^{b}18$–20); to remark from time to time that such and such view is generally held, 'for people shrink from trying to upset customary opinions unless they have some objection to bring' ($156^{b}20$–2); and to refrain from being zealous, 'for people offer more opposition to the zealous' ($156^{b}23$–5). 'Speaking most generally, the questioner should argue in such an obscure manner that when he states his conclusion, the answerer would be puzzled and ask "Why is it so"?' ($156^{a}13$–15).[21]

The above and other tricks described in 8. 1 give the impression that dialectic is a competitive game in which victory is the main aim, or even the impression that it is not distinguishable from eristic. Grote, for example, writes:

> Each party seeks, not to help or enlighten but to puzzle and defeat the other. As at chess or in fencing, to mask one's projects and deceive the adversary is essential to the work and to its purpose . . . According to Aristotle himself, therefore, the Dialectician is agonistic and eristic, just as much as the Sophist . . . The conflict of two minds each taking advantage of the misconceptions, short-comings, and blindness of the other, is the essential feature of Dialectic as Aristotle conceives it.[22]

[21] While describing the tricks the questioner should use for concealing his conclusion, Aristotle remarks that it is good to make 'what is useful to the argument obscure' because then 'people are more likely to state what they really think' ($156^{b}7$–9). It may seem, therefore, that concealing one's conclusion serves the constructive purpose of extracting people's real opinions. However, this can also be used for sophistic purposes: in the *Sophistici elenchi* we are told that it is good to demand that the questioner should say what he thinks because this 'gives one the opportunity of leading him into an *adoxon* or falsehood' ($172^{b}17$–18).

[22] Grote, *Aristotle*, 397, 399. This quotation is borrowed from R. Bolton, 'The

Contrary to Grote's accusation, Aristotle distinguishes dialectic, or at least tries to distinguish it, from eristic or sophistic.[23] Unlike them, dialectic (1) always reasons validly and (2) reasons from *endoxa*,[24] while eristic and sophistic only *appear* to do that in one way or another.[25] The impression that dialectic is merely competitive seems to be mistaken also when one takes into account Aristotle's words about the common task (*τὸ κοινὸν ἔργον*): '[In a dialectical argument] there is a common purpose, unless the parties are merely competing against one another [*πλὴν τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων*]; and then they cannot both reach the same goal, since more than one cannot be victorious' (8. 11, 161^{a}38–^{b}1). This passage gives the impression that Aristotle does not regard dialectic which pursues the common task as a procedure in which it is possible to win. In this sense, dialectic is not competitive.[26]

We confront a puzzle. On the one hand, the tricks (some of which are employed by the sophist)[27] described in 8. 1 give the impression that dialectic is competitive or even eristic. On the other hand, Aristotle's words about the common purpose (in 8. 11) seem to

Problem of Dialectical Reasoning (*Συλλογισμός*) in Aristotle', in *Ancient Philosophy*, 14 (1994), 99–132 at 102.

[23] Sophistic arguments are distinguished from eristic ones. The latter are used for the sake of victory (or the appearance of it), whereas the former for the sake of the appearance of wisdom and winning a reputation, which is helpful for making money (*SE* 171^{b}22–34).

[24] It has been shown in sect. 2 that in special situations a dialectical syllogism includes views which are not *endoxa*. Would these arguments be eristic according to the criterion outlined above? Not if one recognizes that pretence and dishonesty are the essential elements of eristic arguments: they only *appear* to be endoxic or valid arguments. In dialectic, on the other hand, there is no element of pretending: we have seen in sect. 2 that when the questioner poses *adoxa* the answerer recognizes them as such and even has to make sure that they are less *adoxa* than the conclusion.

[25] *Top.* 100^{b}23–101^{a}4; *SE* 165^{b}7–8, 171^{b}6 ff. In the *Sophistici elenchi* (171^{b}18–20) we are also told that apparent syllogism is the one which merely appears to accord with the subject-matter.

[26] This conclusion is confirmed by the way Aristotle introduces competitive arguments in the *Sophistici elenchi*: he describes them alongside sophistic arguments, which suggests that competitive arguments are used not by a dialectician but by a sophist. For example, ch. 3, which mentions the five main aims of sophistic arguments, is introduced as the one which deals with competitive arguments (165^{b}12–13). Chapters 12–14 present the ways a sophist is able to lead his opponent to a paradox (172^{b}10–11), solecism, and the state of babbling, and these ways are described, at the closing statement of ch. 14, as 'competitive arguments' (174^{a}12). Chapter 15 is about sophistical tricks (e.g. 174^{b}9, 174^{b}12) and is summarized: 'We have now dealt with the sources of questions and how they ought to be asked in competitive arguments' (175^{a}1–2).

[27] For the defence of this statement see below.

exclude the competitiveness of dialectic. Scholars have found it difficult to reconcile these two, apparently contradictory, aspects. Grote, at one extreme, overemphasizes the tricks and identifies dialectic with a competitive game or even sophistry; Brunschwig, at the other extreme, focuses on the passages about the common task, the interpretation of which makes him claim that dialectic is not agonistic but co-operative.[28]

The solution to this puzzle, I shall argue, is that dialectic is both a co-operative procedure and a competitive game. Its competitiveness is restricted, however, by certain rules and in particular by the OP. As long as dialectic proceeds in accordance with these rules, I shall contend, both the questioner and the answerer can be as competitive as they wish: they can try to deceive and puzzle each other without hindering the common task. I shall defend such an interpretation on the basis of Aristotle's words about the common task:

> Criticism of an argument when it is taken by itself is not the same thing as when it forms the subject of questions; for often the person questioned is the cause of the argument not being properly discussed [*μὴ καλῶς διεκλέχθαι*], because he does not concede the points which would have enabled the argument against his thesis to have been properly carried out [*διὰ τὸ μὴ συγχωρεῖν ἐξ ὧν ἦν διαλεχθῆναι καλῶς*]; for it is not within the power of one party to ensure the proper accomplishment of the common task [*τὸ κοινὸν ἔργον*]. It is, therefore, necessary sometimes to attack the speaker and not his thesis, when the questioner is on the watch for points against the questioner and also employs abuse. By behaving awkwardly [*δυσκολαίνοντες*], then, people make their discussions competitive [*ἀγωνιστικάς*] instead of dialectical [*οὐ διαλεκτικάς*]. (161^{a}16–24)

[28] Brunschwig, 'Arguments'. Yet another interpretation is given by Owen in *Aristotle on Dialectic*, 106–7. He suggests that competitive tricks for concealment are not a part of a good dialectic. According to Aristotle, however, as Bolton notices ('The Problem of Dialectical Reasoning', 103), concealment is necessary in dialectic ('since the whole endeavour [dialectic] is directed against another (*πρὸς ἕτερον*) it is necessary to use these things [that is, concealment]' (*Top.* 155^{b}26–8)).

Bolton ('The Problem of Dialectical Reasoning', 104–5) argues, on the basis of 155^{b}26–8, that concealment does not have to be used for competitive purposes and that it is useful in co-operative dialectic. Against Grote, he concludes that 'non-gymnastic dialectic for inquiry . . . is not only not eristic but also not agonistic' (105). Bolton's interpretation of one passage is not sufficient, however, for demonstrating that Grote is wrong to think that dialectic is competitive (or even eristic). Grote's point is that, whatever Aristotle *says*, the tricks described 8. 1 seem by all criteria competitive (or even eristic); that is, that although Aristotle tries to distinguish eristic and dialectic, he does not succeed.

Now in business he who hinders the common task [τὸ κοινὸν ἔργον] is a bad partner, and the same is true in argument; for here, too, there is a common purpose, unless the parties are merely competing against one another [πλὴν τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων]; and then they cannot both reach the same goal, since more than one cannot be victorious. It makes no difference whether a man acts like this in his answers or in his questions; for he who asks questions in an eristic spirit [ἐριστικῶς ἐρωτῶν] and he who in replying refuses to admit what is apparent [τὸ φαινόμενον], and to accept whatever the questioner wishes to ask, are both of them bad dialecticians [φαύλως διαλέγεται] (161^{a}37–^{b}5).

In the above passages Aristotle does not spell out what exactly the common task is. But he explains why the questioner and the answerer can be responsible for not carrying it out properly, and this information is useful for determining what pursuing the common task means in practice.

As far as the faults of the questioner are concerned, we are told only that a bad questioner is the one who asks questions in an eristic spirit (ὅ τε γὰρ ἐριστικῶς ἐρωτῶν φαύλως διαλέγεται). What does it mean to ask questions eristically?

Eristic and sophistic arguments, and the ways to achieve them, are described in the *Sophistici elenchi*. It is interesting to note that some of the methods by which the sophist is advised to bring his opponent to paradox[29] are similar to, or even the same as, the methods for concealment described at *Topics* 8. 1. For example, Aristotle's advice to the sophist to put his questions alternately (*SE* 174^{a}23–5) is the same as his advice to the questioner in the *Topics* 'to alternate [a proposition] which leads to one conclusion with another which leads to another conclusion' (*Top.* 156^{a}24–5); the advice to the sophist to put his 'question in a negative form, as though you wanted the opposite of what you really want' (*SE* 174^{a}30–2) is similar to the advice given to the questioner in the *Topics* to leave 'it obscure whether [one] wishes to establish what [one] is really proposing or its opposite' (*Top.* 156^{b}6–7).[30]

Since tricks for the concealment of one's conclusion do not by

[29] Besides aiming at bringing an opponent to paradox, the sophist aims at refutation, fallacy, solecism, and the reduction of the opponent to the state of babbling (*SE* 165^{b}12–22).

[30] Aristotle is aware of these similarities between dialectical and sophistic ways of asking questions. He says that 'all the resources for concealment mentioned before [plausibly in the *Topics*, 8. 1] are also useful for agonistic arguments' (*SE* 174^{a}26–8). ('Agonistic' arguments are equivalent in the *Sophistici elenchi*, as mentioned before (see n. 26), to 'sophistic' ones. See also *SE* 174^{a}13–15.)

themselves differentiate dialectic and sophistry, what does distinguish the dialectical way of asking questions from asking them eristically? We are told in the *Sophistici elenchi* that what differentiates the dialectician from the sophist (or the eristic) is their different motivations and purposes. So although they sometimes employ similar (or the same) tricks, the sophist employs them for his ulterior dishonest purposes (e.g. in order to win an argument), whereas the dialectician employs the tricks while still pursuing the common task. Here one may ask a further question, however: since both the sophist and the dialectician use similar (or the same) tricks, how do sophistic dishonesty and the dialectician's co-operative purpose manifest themselves in practice?

The sophist, as mentioned earlier, reasons only apparently or reasons only from apparent *endoxa*. One may plausibly think that to ask questions eristically is to ask questions which aim at an eristic syllogism, one which is not real but only apparent in one of the ways specified above. A dialectician, on the other hand, let us recall, reasons validly from real *endoxa* (e.g. $100^{b}23$–$101^{a}4$). This general (and inexact, according to Aristotle himself at $101^{a}18$–24) characterization of dialectical procedures was made more specific in Section 2 of this paper. It was argued there that a proper dialectical syllogism is one which proceeds from premisses which are more *endoxa* (and more knowable) than the conclusion; that is, one which is built in accordance with the OP.[31] One may plausibly think that arguing in accordance with the OP is necessary for accomplishing the common task. Although both the dialectician and the sophist sometimes use the same tricks, whereas the sophist is satisfied with an apparent syllogism and/or apparent *endoxa*, the dialectician builds real conclusive syllogisms in accordance with the OP.[32]

The above conclusion is tentative to an extent: Aristotle himself does not spell out that pursuing the common task involves following the OP. But since he specifies in 8. 5 that the questioner who argues well builds his syllogism in accordance with the OP, there is good

[31] Other rules in accordance with which a dialectical syllogism should be built were mentioned in sect. 2 (see n. 14).

[32] One might wonder whether a person who builds real conclusive syllogisms which are based on real *endoxa* but which do not follow the OP would be a sophist. It seems that it would be too strong to call such a person a sophist, but it definitely would be appropriate to call him a bad dialectician: we are told explicitly at $160^{a}14$–16 that 'Those who attempt to reason from premisses which are more *adoxa* than the conclusion obviously do not reason well'.

reason to think that this is essential for achieving the common task.[33]

In the two passages about the common task cited above (161^{a}16–24 and 161^{a}37–^{b}5) Aristotle mentions two ways in which the answerer can be responsible for hindering the accomplishment of the common task. One is to refuse to concede the premisses which the questioner needs for the establishment of his conclusion.[34] The other is to be awkward (161^{a}23 *δυσκολαίνειν*). Awkward behaviour is described in 8. 8: the answerer behaves awkwardly when he refuses to concede a premiss without having an objection (or counter-argument) to it.[35] Such behaviour is destructive (160^{b}11–13) and makes discussions agonistic instead of dialectical (161^{b}23–4). Yet another related way in which the answerer can obstruct the common task is by conceding inconsistently: often the answerers 'assert contraries and, after first denying something, afterwards admit it' (161^{b}12–14). In such cases 'arguments deteriorate' (161^{b}15). Inconsistency violates the basic requirement of the answerer, which is, let us recall, 'to submit to an argument without saying anything contradictory' (100^{a}20–1).

We have learnt that the answerer destroys the common task if he does not consistently concede the premisses the questioner requires for his argument. Here we may recall that the exact conditions for the answerer's concessions were described in Section 2, where it was shown that the answerer should concede in accordance with the OP. So as in the case of the questioner, although Aristotle does not say explicitly what the common task is, there are reasons for thinking that pursuing it involves answering in accordance with the OP. If both the questioner and the answerer argue in accordance

[33] The further question whether accomplishing the common task means establishing truths will be pursued in sect. 5.

[34] This point is made twice: 'Often the person questioned is the cause of the argument not being properly discussed because he does not concede the points which would have enabled the argument against his thesis to have been properly carried out' (161^{a}17–19); 'he who in replying refuses to admit what is apparent and accept whatever the questioner wishes to put [is a bad dialectician]' (161^{b}3–5).

[35] 'If a man refuses to concede when he has no objection or counter-argument, he is obviously being awkward [*δυσκολαίνει*]' (160^{b}10–11); 'to hold up the argument without an objection, either real or apparent, is to be awkward. If, therefore, a man refuses to concede the universal, in a case where many instances are displayed, without having an objection to offer, he is clearly being awkward' (160^{b}2–5).

with the OP, the common task is, to that extent, being carried out properly.

It was said above that the answerer must not obstruct the common task by refusing to concede a premiss. This does not mean, however, that he is not allowed to use any tricks which would mislead the questioner and make his task more difficult. For as noted above, the answerer can refuse to concede a premiss provided that he has an objection or a counter-argument.[36] In 8. 10 Aristotle distinguishes four kinds of objections (161^a1–12): solutions which demolish 'that on which the falsehood depends' (161^a2);[37] objections against the questioner; objections against a question; and objections which relate to the time available. They are all referred to as 'the ways in which it is possible to prevent [a man] from bringing his argument to a conclusion' (161^a1) and the three last ones are described as 'hindrances and obstacles in the path to conclusions' (161^a14–15). Aristotle does not, then, criticize the answerer for trying to prevent the questioner from reaching the conclusion. In 8. 8 and 10 he rather seems to take it for granted. A person who can make objections is a skilful dialectician (8. 14, 164^b2–4).

Since especially the questioner but also the answerer are allowed and advised to use various tricks which aim at misleading, deceiving, and taking advantage of the shortcomings of the opponent and which rightly appear to be unfair, it would be wrong to deny that dialectic is competitive in the way Grote meant it. Aristotle does not ever criticize either of the opponents for using the tricks: even in 8. 11, where he presents criteria for judging a dialectical argument, there is no pejorative remark about trickery. Aristotle recognizes, then, that since dialectic involves two opponents whose tasks are opposite, it is only natural that the desire to win and competitive instincts will be awakened.[38] Moreover, by virtue of trickery, dialectic

[36] We are told in 8. 2 that if the answerer refuses to concede the universal, the questioner is justified in demanding an objection (157^a34–5).

[37] Solutions are recommended by Aristotle: 'It is not enough to make an objection . . . why [the argument] is false must also be demonstrated' (160^b36–7). He envisages a situation in which the questioner offers the following argument: '(1) He who sits, writes; (2) Socrates is sitting; Therefore: (3) Socrates is writing.' Aristotle says that it is not enough to demolish the premiss 'Socrates is sitting' even if it is false because 'the argument is not false in respect of this' (160^b30). One should demolish 'that from which the falsehood arises'—i.e. 'He who sits, writes'—for, as Aristotle says, 'not everyone who sits is writing' (160^b33). 'The man who has demolished that on which the falsehood depends has provided a complete solution' (160^b33–4).

[38] Although Aristotle advises dialecticians to use competitive or even sophistic

is not a boring procedure but an entertaining game in which one has the opportunity not only to investigate some issue but also to exercise one's competitive (and sophistic) skills[39] and to show off: to impress and surprise the opponent (and listeners) with clever, original, and unexpected gambits.[40] And entertaining dialectic does not have to be bad dialectic. As long as both the answerer and the questioner build a valid syllogism in accordance with the OP, then, notwithstanding their competitive tricks and the desire to win the argument,[41] the common task is, to that extent, being carried out properly.

It is perhaps helpful to compare a dialectical debate to a court trial in which the defence and the prosecution argue as to whether a defendant X is guilty of committing a crime or not. As in a dialectical debate, their tasks are opposite: it is the task of the defence to argue that X is not guilty and the task of the prosecutor to argue the opposite. Both the defence and the prosecution compete with each other. They desire to win the case. They are allowed to use some competitive tricks so long as they are not breaking the rules of a proper and lawful court trial. So, as in dialectic, their competitive tricks are subordinated to some more important rules imposed by

tricks, he does not *call* dialectic competitive. Quite the opposite, he tends to identify competitive arguments with sophistic ones (see n. 26), and at 161ª23–4 he says that 'awkward people [δυσκολαίνοντες] make their discussions agonistic instead of dialectical', which gives the impression that, for Aristotle, there is no overlap between dialectic and competition. The reason why Aristotle makes such a sharp distinction between dialectic and competition is, I think, his narrow and specific concept of competition, which implies victory of one opponent and hence is in contradiction with the concept of the common task (and co-operation) when two people achieve the same thing. Since, as I have tried to show, the tricks dialecticians employ do not, however, necessarily exclude or hinder co-operation and the common purpose of dialectic, it seems artificial and pointless for Aristotle to deny that dialecticians compete with each other. Although even the sophistic tricks Aristotle permits dialecticians do not lead him to acknowledge that the dialectic is competitive, one is clearly right to think that it is.

[39] This is also useful when one argues with the sophist. For example, at *SE* 175ª33–4 Aristotle mentions someone fighting with an eristic.

[40] Of course, attempts to deceive the opponent by using unfair manœuvres will be in vain if both dialecticians are skilled in fighting them off.

[41] In view of Aristotle's concept of competition (see n. 38) and since the desire to win the argument is a characteristic of an eristic, Aristotle might be reluctant to admit that dialecticians share this desire. It seems, however, that the desire to win, as long as it is subordinated to the desire to accomplish the common task, would not hinder good dialectic. Moreover, assuming the dialecticians pursue the common task, the desire to win could be seen as a stimulus for pursuing it better than the opponent and hence for achieving the best argument for a given conclusion.

the law. Their desire to win the case is secondary (at least, ideally) to the desire to investigate the matter properly and consequently to find out the truth.

4. Dialectic as co-operative (II)

So far we have found out that the answerer should pursue the common task by conceding premisses in accordance with the OP. In 8. 6 Aristotle describes the behaviour of the co-operative answerer in more detail by presenting six possible situations the answerer can find himself in while deciding how to answer a question:

(1) If the thing asked [*ἐρωτώμενον*] seems true [*ᾗ δοκοῦν*] and is *μὴ πρὸς τὸν λόγον*, the answerer should concede it after having said that it seems true [*δοτέον φήσαντα δοκεῖν*]. (160ª1–2)

(2) If the thing asked does not seem true [*μὴ δοκοῦν*] and is *μὴ πρὸς τὸν λόγον*], the answerer should grant it but he should add that it does not seem true [*μὴ δοκοῦν*] so that he does not appear silly [*εὐηθείας*]. (160ª2–3)

(3) If the thing asked is *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* and seems true [*δοκοῦντος*], the answerer should remark that it seems true [*δοκεῖ*] but that it is too near to the original proposition and that, if it is conceded, the thesis is destroyed [*ἀλλὰ λίαν σύνεγγυς τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀναιρεῖται τούτου τεθέντος τὸ κείμενον*]. (160ª3–6)

(4) If the premiss is *πρὸς τὸν λόγον*, but too *adoxon*, the answerer should say that, if the concession is made [*τούτου τεθέντος*], the conclusion results [*συμβαίνειν*] but that what has been proposed is too silly. (160ª6–8)

(5) If the premiss is neither *adoxon* nor *endoxon* and *μηδὲν πρὸς τὸν λόγον*, it should be conceded without qualification [*δοτέον μηδὲν διορίσαντι*]. (160ª8–10)

(6) If the premiss is neither *adoxon* nor *endoxon* and *πρὸς τὸν λόγον*, the answerer should add that, if it is conceded, the original proposition is destroyed [*ἀναιρεῖται τεθέντος τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ*]. (160ª10–11)

The above situations introduce the distinction between *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* and *μὴ πρὸς τὸν λόγον* premisses. What is a *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* premiss? We are told that if such a premiss is conceded, the conclusion results (situation 4) and the original proposition is destroyed (situation 6). In situation 3 the *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* premiss is characterized as 'too near to the original proposition [*λίαν σύνεγγυς τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ*]'. Although, as far as I know, Aristotle never explains this descrip-

tion, he points out in situation 3 that if this premiss is conceded, the answerer's thesis (*τὸ κείμενον*) is destroyed; that is, the questioner successfully proves his conclusion. This suggests that the premiss which is *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* and 'too close to the original proposition' is the premiss which directly leads to the questioner's conclusion as, for example, the premiss 'smoking causes cancer' leads directly, and hence is close, to the conclusion 'smoking is unhealthy'. In other words, the *πρὸς τὸν λόγον* premiss is the one which clinches the argument, and I shall refer to it as 'clinching' (the *μὴ πρὸς τὸν λόγον* premiss will be referred to as 'non-clinching').

The clue to interpreting 8. 6 is given at its end. Aristotle concludes his survey of the six situations described there with the words:

> In this way [*οὕτω*] the answerer will not seem to suffer through his own fault [*δι' αὑτόν*], since he concedes each premiss while foreseeing the result of so doing, and the questioner will achieve his argument provided that all the premisses which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion are conceded to him [*τιθεμένων αὐτῷ πάντων τῶν ἐνδοξοτέρων τοῦ συμπεράσματος*]. (160ª11–14)

We are told above that the questioner will achieve his argument provided that the answerer concedes all the premisses which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion. This suggests that the answerer should concede premisses in accordance with the OP in all six situations described in 8. 6. This point is reinforced in Aristotle's next statement: 'Those who attempt to reason from premisses which are more *adoxa* than the conclusion [*ἐξ ἀδοξοτέρων τοῦ συμπεράσματος*] do not reason well [*οὐ καλῶς συλλογίζονται*]. Therefore such premisses should not be conceded to the questioners' (160ª14–16).

Provided that the answerer concedes in accordance with the OP, the questioner will reach his conclusion. But, as we are told at 160ª11–14, the answerer will not be thought to suffer through his own fault because he foresaw the results of his concessions and consciously allowed the questioner to reach his conclusion. Chapter 8. 6, then, describes how the answerer should behave in order to benefit the questioner's argument and in order to ensure that, even if the questioner manages to prove his conclusion, the answerer would not be judged a loser. Below, I analyse the six situations cited which specify what considerations the answerer should bear in mind when deciding whether to concede a premiss.

Situations 1, 2, and 5 deal with premisses which are non-clinching

(μὴ πρὸς τὸν λόγον). Every time such a premiss (irrespective of whether it is *endoxon* or *adoxon*) is posed, the answerer should concede it.[42] He should also indicate that he is aware of the nature of the premiss: in situation 1 he should remark that it is *endoxon*;[43] in situation 2, that it is *adoxon*: otherwise he would appear silly, perhaps because agreeing to something implausible without remarking upon it could give the impression that he was not aware of its implausibility.

The answerer's remarks about the nature of each question seem to be his way of indicating to the questioner that he, the answerer, understands the questioner's procedures. The answerer's remarks may also be seen as an indication that dialectical debates took place within a circle of listeners—if the answerer shows publicly that he knows what is going on in the discussion he will create a positive impression and it is more likely that he will be judged a good dialectician.

Situations 3, 4, and 6 deal with clinching (πρὸς τὸν λόγον) premisses. They are difficult to interpret mainly because of the phrase 'if [*or* when] it is conceded [τούτου τεθέντος]', which is ambiguous: it is not clear whether the answerer does, or does not, concede the premiss.[44] I shall attempt to reflect this ambiguity in my interpretations below.

Situation 4. 'If the premiss is clinching but too *adoxon*, the answerer should say that, if the concession is made [τούτου τεθέντος], the conclusion results (συμβαίνειν] but that what has been proposed is too silly.'

Does the answerer concede the premiss? Since the answerer who follows the OP should not concede a premiss which is more *adoxon* than the conclusion, in order to answer this question, it would be useful to know whether the 'too' *adoxon* premiss in situation 4 is

[42] The answerer should concede an *adoxon* premiss provided, as argued in sect. 2, that it is less *adoxon* than the conclusion.

[43] Situation 1 is about a premiss which seems true (δοκοῦν) rather than about a premiss which is *endoxon*. *Endoxa* are, however, equivalent to τὰ δοκοῦντα. This is clear from the definition of *endoxa* at 100^{b}21–3 and from situations 4, 5, and 6, in which *endoxon* is replaced with δοκοῦν (and *adoxon* with μὴ δοκοῦν).

[44] The genitive absolute τούτου τεθέντος can be translated either as conditional 'if he concedes' or as unconditional, e.g. as temporal 'when he concedes' or as causal 'because he concedes'. The last construction especially suggests that the answerer concedes a premiss. The other two translations do not determine whether he concedes it or not.

more or less *adoxon* than the conclusion. This, unfortunately, is not clear from Aristotle's words.

(*a*) At first sight it seems that the 'too' *adoxon* is more *adoxon* than the conclusion. For, it seems, if the answerer judged the premiss less *adoxon* (e.g less implausible) than the conclusion, he would not think that it is 'too' *adoxon* (too implausible). If this is the case, the answerer (assuming that he argues in accordance with the OP) should not concede it. He should remark that although, if the premiss is conceded, the conclusion results, what has been proposed is too silly.[45]

(*b*) Since the ambiguous phrase τούτου τεθέντος seems to suggest that Aristotle wants to leave it open whether the answerer concedes or does not concede the 'too' *adoxon*, let us then consider the possibility of the 'too' *adoxon* being less *adoxon* than the conclusion. We are told that 'what has been proposed' in situation 4 is too silly. Here is an example of an argument which illustrates this point:

(1) Pleasure is healthy.
(2) Drinking excessively gives one pleasure.
∴ (3) Drinking excessively is healthy.

It is difficult to judge decisively whether a premiss is 'too' *adoxon*.[46] But, I think, in the above syllogism both premisses are 'too' *adoxa* to make a convincing and plausible argument for the conclusion that 'drinking excessively is healthy'. They are still less *adoxa* than the conclusion, however.

We know from 8. 5 that if the questioner argues for a view which is *adoxon* and he puts forward a premiss which is less *adoxon* than the conclusion, the answerer should concede it. Hence it seems that the answerer will concede e.g. premiss (2) in the above syllogism.

[45] Let us illustrate interpretation (*a*) by envisaging that the questioner tries to build e.g. the following syllogism: '(1) Every Frenchman is short; (2) Napoleon was a Frenchman; Therefore: (3) Napoleon was short'. In such a syllogism the first premiss is *too adoxon* (it is absurd to think that every Frenchman is short) and more *adoxon* than the conclusion. In this situation the answerer should say that if he concedes the premiss 'Every Frenchman is short' the questioner's aimed-at conclusion ('Napoleon was short') results. However, since premiss (1) is too silly and more silly (and more *adoxon*) than the conclusion, the answerer would refuse to concede it.

[46] Whether a premiss is judged 'too' *adoxon* seems to depend on the circumstances and the time of the dialectical debate, on the answerer's judgement, and the type of audience listening to a dialectical debate: for example, the premiss 'drinking excessively gives one pleasure' may be thought of as *endoxon* by alcoholics but, I presume, it is too *adoxon* for the majority of people.

On the other hand, since premiss (2) is 'too' *adoxon* and does not make the argument plausible, it seems that the answerer should be reluctant to concede it.

It is difficult to decide what the answerer should do in these circumstances. Aristotle's words in situation 4 do not permit an unequivocal interpretation. A helpful suggestion is offered at 161^{b} 34–8:

> One ought not to demand that the reasoning of every problem should be equally plausible [*ἐνδόξους*] and convincing [*πιθανούς*]; for it is an immediate result of the nature of things that some subjects of enquiry are easier and some more difficult, so if a man carries his conviction by means of views which are most *endoxa* [*μάλιστα ἐνδόξων*], he has argued well.

We are told here that one should try to find the best, i.e. the most endoxic, premisses for a given conclusion. The passage seems to refer to the questioner. But it has been emphasized in this paper that the quality of a dialectical argument is not only the responsibility of the questioner but of the answerer as well. It has been stressed that the answerer should co-operate with the questioner in building a good dialectical argument (that is, an argument which follows the OP). Hence there is reason to think that the answerer should also be concerned with the questioner building the best, most endoxic, argument possible. In fact, the questioner's argument will consist of the most endoxic premisses (as it should according to the passage cited above) only if the answerer concedes them.

On the basis of such considerations, it is plausible to think that it is the benefit of the argument which governs the answerer's decision whether to concede the 'too' *adoxon* premiss. The two possible interpretations pursued below explain this in more detail. The advantage of offering two interpretations is that they preserve the ambiguity of meaning of *τούτου τεθέντος*.

The answerer (according to interpretation (*b*), now under consideration) has already compared the 'too' *adoxon* premiss with the conclusion and has decided that it is less *adoxon* than the conclusion. Now he has to judge the 'too' *adoxon* premiss in the light of the conclusion once again in order to decide whether it is possible to find a better (less adoxic) one for the conclusion in question.

(*b*1) If he decides that the conclusion offers scope for finding a more plausible (and less adoxic) premiss he may, for the benefit of the discussion, decide to inform the questioner about it. He may

say that he realizes that if he concedes the 'too' *adoxon* premiss, the questioner will reach his conclusion, but that the argument, as it stands now, is too silly. This would be an invitation for the questioner to search for better (less adoxic) premisses which would make the argument more appealing and convincing.[47]

So it is not that the answerer simply refuses to concede the premiss. Since the premiss is less *adoxon* than the conclusion, this might be seen as hindering the OP.[48] Instead he acknowledges publicly that the questioner has nearly proved his conclusion but not well *enough*. As a result, the questioner has a chance to find better premisses and build a better argument for the conclusion in question. So, although the answerer prevents the questioner from reaching his conclusion, it is clear that he does so for the sake of a better discussion. According to this interpretation, situation 4 envisages a co-operative answerer who helps the questioner to build the best possible argument for a given conclusion.

(*b*2) One may also envisage a dialectical debate, in which the answerer decides that the premiss which is 'too' *adoxon* and does not make the argument convincing is nevertheless the best (or perhaps the only) premiss the questioner could find for a given conclusion. This would be likely to happen when the questioner argues for a conclusion which is so absurd and *adoxon* that there are not any better (less adoxic) premisses which lead to it.

In such circumstances, the answerer should make sure that the 'too' *adoxon* premiss is less *adoxon* than the conclusion and concede it. Then, he should still remark that when this concession is made the questioner's argument results but what is proposed is too silly. This remark shows that he concedes the premiss with full awareness of its implausibility—otherwise he might appear to be silly himself. By virtue of his concession, the questioner would prove his conclusion. But since the answerer foresaw, and in fact consciously brought about, this consequence, no one would think that he has lost the discussion. Ending a futile debate may be more praiseworthy than prolonging it indefinitely.

Situation 3. 'If the thing asked is clinching and seems true, the

[47] For example, the questioner could try to build the syllogism for the conclusion 'Drinking excessively is healthy' cited in sect. 2.

[48] One might think that situation 4 invites one to qualify the OP as saying that the answerer should concede a premiss which is less *adoxon* than the conclusion *only if* it is not 'too' *adoxon*. This qualified OP is followed by the answerer in the situation envisaged by interpretation (*b*1) above but not in (*b*2), which is considered next.

answerer should remark that it seems true but it is too near to the original proposition and that, if it is conceded [*τούτου τεθέντος*], the thesis is destroyed.'

Here Aristotle again uses the ambiguous phrase *τούτου τεθέντος*, which does not univocally determine whether the answerer concedes or does not concede the premiss. The premiss is characterized as 'too near to the original proposition [*λίαν σύνεγγυς τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐστί*]'. At first sight it seems that this is a pejorative description which suggests that such a premiss is disadvantageous for a dialectical argument. This possibility is explored in interpretation (*a*) below, according to which the answerer does not concede the premiss. However, in order to preserve the ambiguity of *τούτου τεθέντος*, I also suggest the alternative interpretation (*b*), according to which the answerer concedes it.[49]

(*a*) Let us illustrate situation 3 by imagining that the questioner argues for the conclusion that 'Pornography is bad' by putting forward the premiss 'Pornography degrades women'. This premiss is too close to the questioner's conclusion—the answerer can foresee that if he says 'Yes' to the question 'Is pornography degrading for women?', the questioner will have virtually proved his conclusion. One may envisage that in such circumstances the answerer will remark that the premiss seems true but that it is too near to the original proposition and that, if conceded, the thesis will be destroyed.

The 'but' in the answerer's response seems to suggest that he objects to the premiss being too close to the conclusion. Such a premiss may seem defective because it virtually presupposes the conclusion and prevents a sufficiently complex and illuminating argument from being developed.

One needs to judge a premiss in the light of the conclusion in order to decide whether it is a satisfactory or a defective premiss. At $161^{b}39$–$162^{a}2$ Aristotle says that: 'there is no reason why the argument should not be . . . commendable in itself but reprehensible when viewed in relation to the proposition, when it is easy to draw a conclusion from many premisses which are *endoxa* and true'.

The premiss 'Pornography degrades women' is part of a valid and commendable argument for the conclusion 'Pornography is bad'.

[49] In the two interpretations below I assume that the premiss which is too close to the questioner's conclusion is more *endoxon* than the conclusion. If it is less *endoxon*, the issue is straightforward: the answerer should not concede it.

This premiss can be seen, however, as reprehensible when viewed in the light of the conclusion: one could find other endoxic premisses which do not presuppose, but still lead to, the conclusion and which would make the argument more complex. Rather than be satisfied with such a defective premiss, the answerer may hence decide that it is better for the argument if, instead of conceding it, he allows the questioner to search for other more illuminating premisses.[50] Since it does not seem difficult to argue for the conclusion envisaged, the answerer may even expect the questioner to exercise some competitive tricks which would excite and surprise listeners rather than bore them with a straightforward but complacent argument.

At 155^{b}10–14 Aristotle points out a difference between a dialectician and a philosopher: 'The philosopher and individual seeker does not care if, though the premisses by means of which his reasoning proceeds are true and *endoxa*, the answerer refuses to admit [μὴ θῇ] them because they are close to the original proposition [διὰ τὸ σύνεγγυς εἶναι τοῦ ἐξ ἀρχῆς] and he foresees what will result from his admission.'[51]

Dialectic, in contrast to philosophy, is πρὸς ἕτερον and hence the questioner has to take account of the answerer's possible behaviour. Since it is likely that the answerer will not concede the premiss which leads directly to the questioner's conclusion, it is vain for the questioner to try to secure it. But let us note that in the above passage we are not told that the answerer always refuses to concede such a premiss. The possibility that he does is considered below.

(*b*) Whether the answerer concedes the premiss which is too close to the questioner's conclusion depends on the view the questioner

[50] The premiss, in situation 3, is characterized as too close to the conclusion and as the premiss which destroys the answerer's thesis. One might think that the answerer refuses to concede the premiss not because it is seen as defective but solely because it destroys his thesis. This is a possible behaviour of the answerer but not of a good answerer. If the premiss is not defective and is *endoxon*, a good and co-operative answerer should concede it. This is what Aristotle advocates repeatedly in all three situations envisaged in 8. 5 (analysed in sect. 2) and in 8. 11 (analysed in sect. 3): not conceding *endoxa* is thought of as a major fault of the answerer, who by doing so behaves awkwardly and obstructs the common task of the dialectical debate.

[51] The co-operative answerer I am concerned with concedes an *endoxon* unless it is defective in some way (e.g. it is too close to the conclusion). But the passage cited above (155^{b}10–14) is also open to a different interpretation: it may be that it depicts a bad answerer, or even an eristic, who does not concede an *endoxon* premiss solely because it destroys his thesis. Since philosophy is not πρὸς ἕτερον, the philosopher is not dependent on anyone else in his argument. See sect. 5 for a more detailed comparison between dialectic and philosophy.

argues for. Some views are difficult to argue for. At $161^{b}39$–$162^{a}1$ Aristotle remarks that it is possible that an argument is reprehensible in itself but commendable when viewed in relation to the proposition. That is, it might be that a defective premiss (e.g. too close to the conclusion) which forms a part of a reprehensible argument is still the best (or even the only)[52] premiss for a given conclusion and hence that, when viewed in the light of this conclusion, it is a part of a commendable argument.[53] In such circumstances the answerer may decide to concede it.

Premisses which are too close to the conclusion are imperfect and do not make arguments illuminating or insightful. The answerer's awareness of such an imperfection is expressed by the 'but' (*ἀλλά*). He says that, if the concession is made, the conclusion results but (*ἀλλά*) unfortunately the premiss is too close to the conclusion. By making such a remark, the answerer shows that he is aware of the consequence of his concession and of listeners' possible disappointment that even the best premiss does not make the argument more revealing.

Situation 6. 'If the premiss is neither *adoxon* nor *endoxon* and clinching, the answerer should add that, if it is conceded, the original proposition is destroyed [*ἀναιρεῖται τεθέντος τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ*].'

This situation is open to similar interpretations to situation 3. (*a*) The answerer should not concede the clinching premiss if it is possible for the questioner to find a better one. But (*b*) if the clinching premiss is the best (or the only one) for a given conclusion, the answerer should concede it. In order to guard against giving the impression that he was defeated by the questioner, Aristotle advises the answerer to remark publicly that he is aware of the fact that if he concedes the premiss, his thesis is destroyed. If the answerer concedes each premiss foreseeing the consequence of doing so (*ἐὰν προορῶν ἕκαστα τιθῇ*), he 'will not seem to suffer [*πάσχειν*] through his own fault (*δι' αὑτόν*]' ($160^{a}11$–12) because he guarded his argument well—he conceded the best (or the only possible) premiss for a given argument.

[52] It might be that the questioner tried to secure other premisses which were not too close to the questioner's conclusion, but they were not found plausible by the answerer.

[53] It might be thought e.g. that the premiss 'Drinking excessively makes one forget about one's worries' is too close to the conclusion 'Drinking excessively is healthy' but is the best and perhaps one of the few endoxic premisses which lead to such a conclusion.

We have found out in 8. 5 (considered in Section 2) that the answerer should concede in accordance with the OP. This is confirmed in 8. 6: the answerer should not concede a premiss which is more *adoxon* (or less *endoxon*) than the conclusion. However, 8. 6 focuses in more detail than 8. 5 on the way the answerer should respond: if the questioner's argument is built in accordance with the OP; that is, if the premiss the questioner poses is less *adoxon* (more *endoxon*) than the conclusion, we find out in 8. 6 that there are certain considerations the answerer should bear in mind while deciding whether to concede the premiss or not.

It depends on a specific debate (and on the questioner's specific conclusion) whether a premiss (which is more *endoxon* than the conclusion) should be conceded. Various possibilities were presented in this section. What unites all of them is the theme of the co-operative answerer whose responsibility is to judge what is best for the argument and to concede accordingly.

We know from Section 3 that the questioner may try to trick the answerer. In 8. 6 we find out that it is most important that the answerer see through the questioner's attempts to deceive him, that he understand the questioner's line of reasoning and foresee the consequences of his own concessions. We have seen that the answerer should not be afraid to allow the questioner to reach his conclusion (provided it is argued for well) and that he should not be afraid to prevent the questioner from reaching his conclusion (in the ways described in this section) if he decides that the questioner can build a better argument.

If the answerer behaves in the ways described in 8. 6 he will achieve two aims simultaneously: (1) he will create a good impression and be judged a good dialectician; and (2) he will contribute to the questioner's building the best and strongest argument possible. In the next section I shall consider whether pursuing such a common task leads to the discovery of truths.

5. Dialectic and the discovery of truth

It has been shown that both the questioner and the answerer aim to accomplish the common task of investigating an issue in accordance with the OP. Why does Aristotle insist that dialectic proceed in accordance with this rule?

At first sight one may be inclined to give a minimal answer: the questioner puts forward premisses which are *endoxa* (and more *endoxa* than the conclusion) because they are likely to be conceded by the answerer. The answerer, in turn, concedes such premisses because otherwise he will be judged a bad and unreasonable dialectician who hinders the common task. Endoxic premisses, as Brunschwig notes,

> cannot be easily rejected, under pain of social blame. . . . [They] may be true, of course . . . but it is not their truth, as such, which is of interest to the dialectician, but rather their social undeniability. This is the main reason why Aristotle considers dialectic as an opinion-level, not science-level discipline (contrary to Plato who, for reasons of his own, takes it to be the queen of sciences). ('Arguments', 33)

It is not difficult to understand why philosophy is in accordance with truth (*κατ' ἀλήθειαν*) and dialectic *κατὰ δόξαν*.[54] Dialectic is a question–answer duel. A dialectical premiss, once it is put forward, depends for its survival on the assent of the answerer. The questioner has then to choose premisses which are likely to be conceded. It may be that they are false:[55] true premisses may not be strikingly apparent to the answerer and there is a risk that they will not be accepted.[56] In contrast, philosophy does not have a bipartisan nature. The outcome of philosophical investigations does not depend on someone else's concessions. Hence the philosopher, as remarked before, does not need to anticipate the possible re-

[54] *Top.* 105^{b}30–1; *Post. An.* 81^{b}18–23; *Pr. An.* 46^{a}3–10, 65^{a}35–7. This difference between philosophy and dialectic is one of the main reasons why some scholars think that dialectic is not able to reach truths. For example, Irwin (*First Principles,* 174) writes that Aristotle 'insisted in Book iii [of *Metaphysics*] that the dialectician examines questions from the common beliefs alone (995^{b}22–4), and therefore cannot make the claim to objective truth that we expect from the scientific argument'. See also Brunschwig, 'Arguments', 34, 40.

[55] e.g. 161^{a}26–8, 162^{a}9–11, and twice at 162^{b}27–30.

[56] 'If [the argument] is reached from premisses which are false but *endoxa*, it is a dialectical argument; but if it is reached from premisses which are real [*ὄντων*] but *adoxa*, it is bad' (162^{b}27–8). In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle remarks that, in contrast to philosophy, which reasons on the basis of truth, the dialectician should concentrate on finding the premisses which are as *endoxa* as possible: 'If we are reasoning from the point of view of opinion [*κατὰ δόξαν*], that is, only dialectically, clearly we need only consider whether the conclusion proceeds from the most *endoxa* premisses possible; so that although a given term is not in truth the middle term between A and B, provided that it is accepted [*δοκεῖ*] as such, if we draw our inferences through it the inference is dialectically sound. But with a view to truth it is necessary to proceed from what actually holds' (81^{b}18–23).

actions of anyone: for example, he does not have to worry that 'though the premisses by means of which his reasoning proceeds are true and *endoxa*, the answerer refuses to admit them (because they are close to the original proposition)' (155^{b}11–13). The philosopher can proceed with his demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) from premisses which are true without bothering himself about whether they are found true and convincing by the interlocutor. He can concentrate on searching for the truth, whereas the dialectician has to take into account the skills and intentions of the opponent.[57]

Since in dialectic, in contrast to philosophy, the investigation of some issue depends on the concessions of the interlocutor and since it is possible that the answerer does not concede as well as he should, it may often happen that a dialectical investigation of some issue is not successful. Hence it may seem that dialectic is not a procedure designed for the search for truth. Aristotle is aware of this drawback:

> No art which aims at showing [τῶν δεικνυουσῶν] the nature of anything proceeds by interrogation; for one cannot grant whichever one likes of two portions of the question; for they cannot both lead to a [demonstrative] syllogism [συλλογισμός]. Dialectic, however, does proceed by interrogation, whereas if it aimed at showing something, it would refrain from questions, if not about everything, at any rate about primary things and particular principles; for if the opponent refused to grant these [μὴ διδόντος], dialectic would no longer have any basis on which to argue against the objection. (*SE* 172^{a}15–21)

Although this passage is not easy to interpret, its main point, I think, is clear. Dialectic, if it aimed at proving anything, would refrain from questions because a demonstration which would otherwise be straightforward (e.g. in philosophy) may not be successful if it is the subject of questions in a dialectical debate: it is not certain that the answerer will concede all the necessary pre-

[57] In contrast to Aristotle, who conceives dialectic as κατὰ δόξαν, Plato turns his back on opinion. The entire concern of dialectic, as he conceives it, is with reality and truth: dialectic attempts 'systematically and in all cases to determine what each thing really is [ὃ ἔστιν ἕκαστον]' (*Rep.* 533 B) and it strives to examine everything 'in accordance with reality and not in accordance with opinion [μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν]' (*Rep.* 534 C). For an account of the similarities and differences between Plato's and Aristotle's conception of dialectic see F. Solmsen, 'Dialectic without the Forms', in Owen, *Aristotle on Dialectic*, 49–69.

misses which constitute a demonstration.[58] 'There is no reason why, though the argument is bad, the questioner should not have argued with the answerer in the best possible manner' (*Top.* 161^{b}6–8). The answerer, as mentioned earlier, may concede contraries or can behave awkwardly by refusing to concede the necessary premisses.[59] Then the argument deteriorates and the questioner is entitled to use any methods (even perhaps contravening the OP) which will lead him to his conclusion: 'Against those who behave awkwardly [δυσκολαίνοντας] it is not perhaps possible immediately to employ such reasoning as one wishes, but one only employs such as one can' (161^{b}9–10). Aristotle advises one not to argue with any casual person, 'for against some people argument is sure to deteriorate; for with a man who tries every means to seem to avoid defeat you are justified in using every means to obtain your conclusion, but this is not a seemly proceeding' (164^{b}9–12).

Another reason why dialectic may not be successful in investigating some issue properly is that, unlike philosophy, it has time constraints. It may happen, for instance, that the answerer has not enough time to notice some fault with the questioner's argument:

To take an argument and see and disentangle the fault in it is not the same

[58] Also, in the *Posterior Analytics* we are told that: 'Dialectic is not assigned to any definite genus in this way [sc. in the way science is]. For if it were, it would not ask questions; for in the course of demonstrating [ἀποδεικνύντα] we cannot ask questions, since if contraries are [assumed], the same thing is not proved [μὴ δείκνυσθαι]' (77^{a}31–4). This is Irwin's translation (*First Principles*, 143). Tredennick (in the Loeb translation of the *Posterior Analytics* (London, 1965)) comments on this passage: 'Dialectic proceeds by interrogation, giving the opponent an open choice between opposite answers . . . Science is concerned with the proof of facts; and since the same conclusion cannot be correctly inferred from opposite data, the "questions" of science offer no real choice, because only the right answer will furnish a true premise for the required proof' (76). Also in the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle says that a premiss is dialectical if 'it assumes either part indifferently' and demonstrative if 'it assumes that one part is true' (72^{a}9–11).

[59] Another possible fault of the answerer is depicted in *Top.* 8. 3: 'Things which are primary [τὰ πρῶτα] require definition . . . It is impossible to demonstrate [ἀποδείξαι] anything without starting from the appropriate first principles and keeping up a connected argument until ultimate principles are reached. Now those who are being questioned do not want to give definitions, nor do they want to take any notice if the questioner gives them; and yet it is difficult to argue if what is proposed is not made clear' (158^{a}33–^{b}1). The worst scenario in a dialectical debate is envisaged at 158^{a}29–30: it is possible that the answerer will not even answer the questions asked.

thing as to be able to meet it promptly when one is asked a question. For we often fail to recognize something which we know when it is presented in a different form. Furthermore, as in other spheres a greater degree of speed or slowness is rather a question of training, so in argument also; therefore, even though something may be clear to us, yet, if we lack practice, we often miss our opportunities. (*SE* 175ª20–6)

The quality of a dialectical discussion depends on many factors which do not play any significant role in philosophy. That is why Aristotle emphasises that 'criticism of an argument when it is taken by itself is not the same thing as when it forms the subject of questions' (*Top.* 161ª16–17). Even if a dialectical debate is conducted with the aim of investigating some issue properly and finding the truth, this investigation can be hindered by the fear of defeat, lack of experience in arguing, or simply lack of time. In order to minimize the influence of these factors, Aristotle emphasizes the importance of practising arguing (8. 14 is devoted to some advice on how to practise) and of choosing the right person for the discussion. He insists that dialecticians have to cooperate in following the OP. But what is achieved by following this rule?

It is clear that arguing in accordance with the OP does not necessarily lead to the discovery of truths. We have seen that the main requirement for the dialectical premiss is that it is *endoxon* and hence acceptable. False but endoxic premisses are acceptable whereas true but adoxic are not.[60] The possibility of false premisses does not, on its own, preclude dialectic from reaching truths: Aristotle asserts that it is possible to derive true conclusions from false premisses (*Top.* 162ª10–11). However, sometimes a dialectician has to argue in favour of a false conclusion.[61] In order to make such an argument successful, he has to argue

[60] Even the fact that dialectic ideally proceeds from premisses which are most *endoxa* does not guarantee that it reaches the truth. For most *endoxa* (μάλιστα ἔνδοξα), as Bolton notices ('The Problem of Dialectical Reasoning', 107), can be *adoxa* or even false.

[61] According to Owen (*Aristotle on Dialectic*, 107), arguments in favour of falsehood are used as a *reductio ad impossibile* (162ᵇ16–22) or for contentious purposes 'because they aim at an uncooperative respondent'. This claim by Owen is based on his interpretation of 161ª24–8. However, the possibility of arguing in favour of false conclusion is also, as Bolton notes ('The Problem of Dialectical Reasoning', 106–7), mentioned at 162ª8–11, where it is not related to an uncooperative answerer. Hence it is unjustified to think, as Owen does, that arguments in favour of falsehood are not a part of a proper dialectic.

for it in accordance with the OP. For instance, the argument for Zeno's thesis that motion does not exist may be accepted by the interlocutor by virtue of having premisses which are more *endoxa* than this conclusion. Since the dialectician argues in accordance with the OP irrespective of whether he argues for a view which is false or true, it is apparent that arguing in accordance with this rule does not necessarily lead to the discovery of truths.[62]

Why, then, does Aristotle insist that dialecticians have to follow the OP? Is it right to think that the questioner poses premisses which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion and the answerer concedes them solely because of their persuasive force and social undeniability, as according to the minimalist interpretation focused upon above?

Previous sections of this paper emphasized the role of the answerer in dialectic. It was remarked that, if the questioner's premiss is ambiguous, the answerer should request clarification of its meaning. In Section 4 it was demonstrated that the answerer should concede only those premisses which contribute to the best and strongest argument. If the questioner puts forward the premiss which is more *endoxon* than the conclusion (that is, if he argues in accordance with the OP), the answerer is allowed not to concede it if he decides that it is possible for the questioner to find a better (more plausible and convincing) premiss for a given conclusion.

If the answerer guards the argument so well, the questioner will be able to reach his conclusion by securing premisses which are as *endoxa* as possible for a given conclusion. Assuming the debate proceeds with no hindrances, it is likely that dialecticians will arrive at an argument which is the strongest possible for a given conclusion. Will this help the dialecticians to decide what is true and what false?

One might feel that a conclusion arrived at at the end of a dialectical discussion, even if it is based on the strongest possible argument and even if it seems plausible and true, does not deserve the name of 'truth'. Truth, one might think, amounts to more. For example,

[62] Bolton ('The Epistemological Basis', 234–6) focuses on the idea that the more *endoxon* is equivalent to what is given in perception. However, even this, as Bolton points out, does not guarantee that dialectic leads to truth, for not all perceptual judgements are incorrigible and true.

one might think that one needs some method of justification in order to be able to claim that some conclusion is true; a method other than the strong argument of a singular, however good, dialectical discussion. Pyrrhonism, for example, suggests that one needs a criterion of truth for such purposes. Since it has not been found yet, no discussion, however illuminating, has a chance of ending up with truth.

Aristotle thinks, however, that truth is not unattainable but something we desire, and according to him, we are able to satisfy this desire. For instance, in *Eudemian Ethics* we are told that 'everyone has something of his own to contribute to the truth' ($1216^{b}30–1$) and in the *Rhetoric* that 'people have a sufficient natural capacity for the truth and in most cases attain it' ($1355^{a}15–17$).[63] That, for Aristotle, the world is the place humans are able to understand is also apparent on the basis of his own way of doing philosophy. In his writings he investigates the views of others and, by considering where they went wrong and discovering the elements of truth in their views, he builds his own understanding of reality. It is because he believes that 'whereas no one person can obtain an adequate grasp of [the truth], we cannot all fail in the attempt; each person makes some statement about the natural world, and as an individual contributes little or nothing to the enquiry; but a combination of all conjectures results in something considerable' (*Metaph.* $993^{a}31–^{b}4$).[64] Solely on the basis of such an attitude towards the discovery of truth, it is plausible to think, then, that he would not be averse to the idea that one is able to decide what is true at the end of, and by virtue of, a good dialectical debate in which endoxic views held by others are thoroughly considered. That this is the case is also confirmed in the *Topics*.

[63] Also, in *Nicomachean Ethics* we are told that 'some of these views have been held by many men and men of old, others by a few eminent persons; and it is not probable that either of these should be entirely mistaken, but rather that they should be right in at least one respect, or even in most respects' ($1098^{b}27–9$).

[64] When investigating primary causes, Aristotle writes about the utility of considering the views of others: 'let us avail ourselves of the evidence of those who have before us approached the investigation of reality and philosophized about truth. For clearly they too recognize certain principles and causes, and so it will be of some assistance to our present enquiry if we study their teaching; because we shall either discover some other kind of cause, or have more confidence in those which we have just described' (*Metaph.* $983^{b}1–6$).

In 8. 14 we are told that the method of arguing on both sides is helpful for deciding what is true:[65]

> to take and to have taken in at a glance the results of each of the two hypotheses is no mean instrument for the cult of knowledge and philosophic wisdom [*πρὸς γνῶσιν καὶ τὴν κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν φρόνησιν*]; for then it only remains to make a correct choice of one of them. For such a process one must possess a certain natural ability [*εὐφυΐα*], and real natural ability consists in being able correctly to choose the true and avoid the false. Men of natural ability can do this; for they judge correctly what is best by a correct feeling of love and hatred for what is set before them. (163^b9–16)[66]

Since according to Aristotle a person with *euphuia* is able to discern what is true as a result of arguing on both sides of an issue, this must be even more the result of a dialectical debate. For in dialectic the weaknesses and strengths of a view are revealed. If the questioner's argument goes wrong, the answerer should offer objections which demolish the falsehood. If the questioner's argument is not good enough, the answerer should help him to find a better and a stronger one. Although the quality of a dialectical debate depends, as indicated earlier, on many factors which do not play a significant role in philosophy, their possible negative influence can be, as Aristotle emphasizes, minimized or excluded totally when one chooses, for the debate, the right person who is co-operative and has strong argumentative skills. A well-conducted dialectical debate can be thought of, then, not only as a good way to investigate some view and hence to search for truth, but also as a way of searching for truth superior to any other way

[65] It is also important as a way of preparing oneself for dialectical discussion: 'in dealing with any thesis we must examine the arguments both for and against . . . for the result will be that we shall train ourselves at the same time both for question and for answer' (163^a36–$^b3$). When one has plenty of arguments on both sides 'one is put on guard against contrary arguments' and one has 'an abundance of material for carrying a position by storm' (163^b5–9).

[66] Also, in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle expresses his epistemological optimism: 'the true and the just are naturally superior to their opposites' (1355^a21–2); 'Generally speaking, that which is true and better is naturally always easier to prove and more likely to persuade' (1355^a37–8); 'The capacity to grasp the truth is the same as the capacity to grasp what is like the truth. At the same time, people have an adequate natural inclination toward the truth and so they turn out to attain truth for the most part. Thus, the one who can aim skillfully [in argument] in relation to the truth is equally able to aim skillfully [in argument] in relation to the *endoxa*' (1355^a14–18). This is Bolton's translation ('The Epistemological Basis', 229).

in philosophy: in dialectic, the search for truth is conducted by two people. This is clearly an advantage, since each of them is able to protect the other from possible mistakes and to correct mistakes that have been made. A further advantage of dialectic is the presence of the audience, which keeps an additional rein on the argument.

There seems thus to be no reason why dialectic, if conducted well, would not be able to help one to decide what is true. This is in fact, let us recall, one of the purposes of dialectic specified in 1. 2: dialectic is useful 'for the philosophic sciences because if we are able to raise difficulties on both sides, we shall more easily discern both truth and falsehood on every point' ($101^{a}34$–6). Similarly, since Aristotle conceives dialectic as a co-operative and thorough investigation, and as a search for the strongest argument, he seems to be justified in introducing a dialectical problem as 'an investigation leading either to choice and avoidance or to the truth and knowledge, either by itself or as an aid to the solution of some other such problem' ($104^{b}1$–3) and in assuming in 8. 11 that dialecticians are able to decide whether the conclusion of a dialectical debate is true or false: 'the first thing to look for in an argument itself is whether it reaches a conclusion; the second thing, *whether its conclusion is true or false*, and the third thing, from what premisses it is drawn' ($162^{b}24$–7).

Recapitulating: it seems unlikely that the social undeniability of *endoxa* is the only reason (as it is according to the minimalist interpretation) why dialecticians would argue in accordance with the OP. It is rather that they proceed in accordance with this rule and try to find the strongest argument for a given view because this is helpful for deciding what is true or false.[67]

In order to confirm this conclusion, let us consider the OP in the light of the well-known Aristotelian distinction between the more knowable to us and the more knowable in nature (or absolutely). In order to recall it, it should suffice to quote Aristotle:

Thus absolutely the prior is more knowable [*γνωριμώτερον*] than the pos-

[67] If the dialecticians discuss a view which is strikingly *adoxon* and seems false, then by virtue of investigating it dialectically it is shown that there are no convincing arguments in favour of it (or that even the strongest argument is not convincing) and, as a result, they will have better grounds to judge, and confirm their original impression of, its falsehood.

terior; for example, a point is more knowable than a line, a line than a plane, and a plane than a solid; just as also a unit is more knowable than the number, since it is prior to and the starting-point of all number. Similarly a letter is more knowable than a syllable. To us, however, the converse sometimes happens; for a solid falls most under our perception, and a plane more than a line, and a line more than a point. For most people recognize such things as solids and planes before they recognize lines and points; for the former can be grasped by an ordinary understanding, the latter only by one which is accurate and superior. (*Top.* $141^{b}5$–14)

The OP requires one to proceed from the more to the less knowable. In book 8, in which the OP is presented, Aristotle does not specify whether the more knowable which dialectic proceeds from is more knowable to us or in nature. Bolton argues that it is the former.[68] His argument goes thus:

Dialectic is, like rhetoric, based on things 'which it is in a certain way common to everyone to know' (*Rhet.* $1354^{a}2$–3). Things which are more knowable in nature do not fit this description, however: they are knowable only to a person with an 'accurate and superior understanding'.[69] Furthermore, the things which are most knowable absolutely include the first principles of sciences (cf. *Phys.* $184^{a}16$–23) and they cannot constitute the premisses of a dialectical syllogism because 'they need not be in every case (or any case) known or accepted by appropriate parties'.[70]

In his own writings Aristotle proceeds in accordance with the OP as interpreted above. Why? One of the reasons Aristotle offers is rather obvious: one cannot start anywhere else than with what one understands. We are told in the *Metaphysics* that 'it is advantageous to progress in stages to what is more knowable [in nature], since for everyone learning proceeds in this way, by advancing through what is less knowable in nature to what is more so' ($1029^{b}3$–5) and in the *Physics* that this is 'a natural way to proceed from what is more knowable to us . . . to what is more knowable and clearer in nature' ($184^{a}16$–18).

[68] 'The Epistemological Basis', 206–8.

[69] They are 'knowable not to everyone but only to those who are intellectually in a sound condition, just as also what is healthy absolutely is what is healthy to those who are physically in a sound condition' ($142^{a}9$–11).

[70] Bolton, 'The Epistemological Basis', 207. Bolton is right only to an extent: I shall demonstrate later that, although it does not happen often, it is possible that a dialectical syllogism proceeds from what is more knowable in nature.

The things which are more knowable to us are characterized as views of the world presented to us in sense perception.[71] In *Physics* 1. 1 (184ª22) they are described as undiscriminated or blurred (*συγκεχυμένα*) and a little further on Aristotle advises us: 'Thus we must advance from universals [*ἐκ τῶν καθόλου*] to particulars [*ἐπὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα*]; for it is a whole that is more knowable to sense perception, and the universal is a kind of whole, comprehending many things within it, like parts' (184ª23–6).[72]

This difficult passage is interpreted by Wieland[73] and Scott,[74] according to both of whom the contrast between the *καθόλου* and the *καθ' ἕκαστα* is not between the general and specific (e.g. genus and species or species and individual) but between an undifferentiated jumbled-up whole ('a kind of whole, comprehending many things within in, like parts') and its differentiated constituents. The route from the more knowable to us involves separating this jumbled-up whole into its constituents. By disentangling, analysing, and refining the jumbled-up whole, we move away from a pre-technical undiscriminated concept which embraces a number of elements in an unarticulated way towards a more articulated level of understanding.[75]

But by what means are we able to achieve this more articulated level of understanding? Dialectic seems to be a good method for such purposes. Through the activities of arguing in favour of some view, investigating it from many angles, trying many arguments which do not work, and finally posing the strongest argument in favour of a given view, dialecticians no doubt clarify their concepts. A jumbled-up, hazy whole (that is, the thesis dialecticians start off with) is analysed into constituents; things which were blurred and undifferentiated become clearer. Dialecticians move towards a more articulated level of understanding

[71] e.g. *Phys.* 184ª16–25; *Top.* 141ᵇ10; *Post. An.* 72ª1–5.

[72] This is Scott's translation (*Recollection and Experience* [*Recollection*] (Cambridge, 1995), 121).

[73] W. Wieland, 'Aristotle's Physics and the Problem of Inquiry into Principles' ['Aristotle's Physics'], in Barnes, Schofield, and Sorabji, *Articles on Aristotle*, i. *Science*, 127–40.

[74] Scott, *Recollection*.

[75] See Wieland ('Aristotle's Physics', 128–32) and Scott (*Recollection*, 120–5) for more detail. It is important to note that they both emphasize that the movement from the more knowable to us to the more knowable in nature is a path not from not knowing to knowing but from one form of knowing to another. This issue will be focused on later.

by virtue of which they can more easily discern what is true and false.

So far it has been shown that dialectic is helpful for the discovery of what is true. But Wieland ('Aristotle's Physics', 131) and Scott (*Recollection*, 124) make, on the basis of *Physics* 1. 1, the stronger claim that the process of differentiation described there leads to the discovery of first principles. In *Topics* 1. 2, let us recall, Aristotle claims that dialectic is 'useful with regard to the first principles' (101^a36–$^b3$). Let us investigate now whether, and how, Aristotle pursues the subject of the discovery of first principles in other books of the *Topics*.

First principles include definitions which state the essences of the kinds in question.[76] In 8. 3 Aristotle states that 'it is possible that there should be a syllogism about a definition and the essence of a thing [*δυνατὸν γενέσθαι ὁρισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ τι ἦν εἶναι συλλογισμόν*]' (153^a14–15).[77] He adds, however, that 'few if any of those who hold

[76] e.g. *Post. An.* 72^b24, 90^b24, and 96^b21–5. Besides definitions, first principles also include axioms and existence claims. See R. McKirahan, *Principles and Proofs: Aristotle's Theory of Demonstrative Science* (Princeton, 1992), 36–49. Definitions are the subject of *Top.*, bks. 6 and 7. Since some scholars think that these and other central books of the *Topics* were written at a different time from the peripheral books 1 and 8, one may wonder whether the *Topics* is a coherent work which can be analysed as a whole. J. Brunschwig (*Aristote: Topiques I–IV* (Paris, 1967), pp. lvi–lxxxiii) argues that although the *Topics* is a work with many temporal and internal diversities, it has coherence and unity because its different parts were, at a later date, edited and regrouped into their proper places. He finds it difficult, however, to see consistency and unity in Aristotle's account of definition in books 6 and 7 (p. lxxii). I shall attempt to demonstrate that notwithstanding internal differences, books 6 and 7 form, as far as their main ideas are concerned, a consistent whole and that, even if they do not state it explicitly, they do gesture towards an answer to the question whether, and how, dialectic is able to arrive at definitions.

[77] Aristotle repeats this at 153^a23–4: 'It is clear, then, that it is possible to syllogize a definition'. Are these statements in contradiction with *Post. An.* bk. 2, where the impossibility of the syllogism of the definition is affirmed? According to H. Maier (*Die Syllogistik des Aristoteles* (Tübingen, 1900)), for example, Aristotle contradicts himself. However, H. F. Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* [*Aristotle's Criticism*] (Baltimore, 1944), 34–6 n. 28) argues that *Top.* 8. 3 affirms only the possibility of a dialectical syllogism as distinguished from demonstration. According to Cherniss, the possibility of the former is admitted in *Post. An.* (93^a14–15) and the *Topics* (162^b27). (Brunschwig, *Aristote: Topiques I–IV*, pp. lxvii–lxviii n. 1, considers this issue in more detail.) Bolton ('Definition and Scientific Method in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and *Generation of Animals*' ['Definition and Scientific Method'], in A. Gotthelf and J. G. Lennox (eds.), *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology* (Cambridge, 1987), 120–66 at 151) agrees with Cherniss: 'Aristotle [says] without further qualification that a

discussions syllogize a definition [*οὐδεὶς ἢ ὀλίγοι τῶν διαλεγομένων ὅρον συλλογίζονται*]' (153^{a}8).[78] Why is this so?

A definition ought to be made in terms which are more knowable absolutely (142^{a}6–8)[79] and which can be grasped only by understanding which is 'accurate and superior' (141^{b}13–14). Hence there will be few questioners who possess appropriate understanding to put forward such premisses and few answerers who will find them convincing and concede them.[80] This is what Aristotle says about the syllogism of a definition in 7. 5:

For oneself to discern, and to secure from those who are being questioned, the sort of premisses which one requires is far from easy, for example, that the constituent parts of the description given are, first, genus and, second, differentia, and that the genus and differentiae are predicated in the cat-

syllogistic proof of a definition is possible (153a13 ff.), since a *dialectical* syllogistic proof is clearly possible (cf. *APo.* 93a14–15), whereas a strict demonstration is impossible.'

[78] Aristotle adds 'all take as their starting-point some such assumption as those who deal with geometry and numbers and all other such studies' (153^{a}9–11). In 8. 3 Aristotle alludes to 'another study [*ἀλλὴ πραγματεία*]' which specifies 'both what definition is and how we must frame it' (153^{a}11–12; see also 153^{a}24–5). According to Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism*, 34–6 n. 28), Aristotle refers here to *Post. An.* bk. 2. See also Brunschwig, (*Aristote: Topiques I–IV*, pp. lxvii–lxviii n. 1, who considers this claim. According to Bolton ('Definition and Scientific Method'), Aristotle refers to one of the lost works listed in D.L. 5. 24 (see 151 n. 47 for more detail).

[79] Why? Each thing has one essence (141^{a}35) and hence one definition. On the other hand, if one could define a thing in terms which are more knowable to us, there would be many definitions of the same thing. For 'different things are more knowable to different people, and not the same things equally knowable to all' (141^{b}36–7). Furthermore, different things are more knowable to the same people at different times: 'in the beginning the objects of sense perception [are more knowable]' (142^{a}3), but then, 'when their knowledge becomes more accurate, the converse occurs' (142^{a}4)—things which are independent of perception become more knowable.

[80] At the beginning of book 4, devoted to genus, Aristotle says that genus is seldom the subject of enquiries by dialecticians (120^{b}11–15). In 8. 5 we find out that property and genus are difficult to construct and easy to destroy (154^{b}13–14), but in comparison to them definition is the easiest thing to destroy and the most difficult to confirm (155^{a}17–18). It is the easiest to destroy 'for since it contains many assertions, the opportunities which it offers are very numerous' (155^{a}4) and 'it is more likely that error should occur when the material is copious than when it is scanty' (155^{a}5–6). It is the most difficult to confirm, on the other hand, 'for one has to establish all the other points by syllogizing (namely, that the attributes asserted belong, and that what has been assigned is a true genus, and that the description is peculiar), and, besides this, that the description shows the essence of the thing, and this must be done properly' (155^{a}18–22).

egory of essence. But without these premisses it is impossible to have a syllogism of a definition. (154ª24–9)

It is difficult to syllogize a definition, but it is, as 153ª14–15 asserts, possible. Although usually for most people things which are more knowable to them are not the same as those which are more knowable absolutely, it happens sometimes that they coincide and that 'the same thing is both more knowable to us and also more knowable absolutely' (141ᵇ24–5). This happens, one may plausibly think, in the case of persons who possess 'accurate and superior understanding'. One may envisage, then, that if a dialectical debate is held between a questioner and an answerer with 'accurate understanding' (e.g. two philosophers), the premisses which express the more knowable in nature can be posed and secured. In this case a dialectical syllogism and the OP in accordance with which it is built will proceed from what is not merely more knowable to us, as Bolton argues in 'The Epistemological Basis', but also more knowable in nature.[81]

It seems, then, that it depends on the specific dialectical debate and on the person one argues with whether a dialectical debate, and the OP, proceeds from the more knowable in nature or merely from the more knowable to us.[82] After specifying in 6. 4 that the more knowable absolutely is that which is knowable not to everyone but only to those in an intellectually sound condition, Aristotle observes that 'all such points must be accurately observed and used in discussion as circumstances demand' (142ª12–13). This statement seems to imply that the dialectician whose task is to make sure that his interlocutor concedes the necessary premisses should judge what kind of understanding his interlocutor possesses and argue appropriately. If he argues with a person with 'ordinary understanding', he should put forward premisses which are more knowable to us and closer to percep-

[81] Since it is possible that dialectic proceeds from the more knowable in nature, and first principles are more knowable in nature, it is, in principle, possible to have a demonstration in a dialectical debate. This may happen seldom, however, since the questioner may not possess sufficient knowledge to put forward first principles as the premisses of his syllogism, and, even if he does, it is possible that the answerer will not concede them. It is easier, as remarked before, to conduct a demonstration in philosophy since then one is not dependent on someone else's concessions.

[82] Perhaps this is why Aristotle does not specify in book 8, where the OP is presented, which type of 'more knowable' the OP proceeds from.

tion because others are not likely to be conceded. On the other hand, if he argues with a person who possesses 'accurate understanding', he can try to put forward premisses which are more knowable absolutely—those will be convincing and plausible to his opponent (and more knowable to him) and will be likely to be conceded.

So far we have found out that, although it does not happen often, it is possible to syllogize a definition in dialectic. In the remaining part of this section I shall consider whether Aristotle provides a more elaborate and specific answer to the question of *how* one can do it. First, I shall investigate whether book 6, which is devoted to definition, offers sufficient methods for establishing it.

The commonplaces (*topoi*) described in book 6 seem not to be designed for purposes of establishing a definition since they are presented from a destructive perspective: they do not specify the conditions which have to be fulfilled by a definition in order for it to be good but those which have to be present for a definition offered to be bad. In book 5, which is devoted to property, on the other hand, each commonplace is first described from the destructive point of view and then followed by a constructive appendix where Aristotle shows that, if one avoids committing a mistake which has just been analysed, the property can be seen as assigned correctly in this respect (*κατὰ τοῦτο*). Let us consider a few examples.

The first commonplace advises one, for destructive purposes, to see whether the property assigned is stated in terms which are less knowable. For constructive purposes, on the other hand, one is advised to see whether it is stated in terms which are more knowable ($129^{b}1$–5). For example, if one has asserted 'possessed of sensation' as the property of a 'living creature', one has employed more knowable terms and hence 'possessed of sensation' would in this respect (*κατὰ τοῦτο*) have been correctly assigned as a property of 'living creature' ($129^{b}26$–9).

The second commonplace advises one, in destructive argument, to see 'whether any of the terms assigned in the property is employed in several senses' ($129^{b}30$–1). In constructive argument, on the other hand, one 'must see whether any of the terms or the expression as a whole does not bear more than one meaning' ($130^{a}8$–9). For example, it is correct in this respect (*κατὰ*

τοῦτο) to assert that it is a property of fire that it is 'the body which most easily moves upwards' since neither of the terms assigned, nor the whole expression, has more than one meaning (130ª10–14).[83]

It is apparent that commonplaces presented from the destructive perspective can be easily changed into constructive ones. What one searches for in both kinds of commonplace is essentially the same, although one searches for it from a different point of view: in destructive arguments one looks for a mistake the opponent has committed; in constructive arguments one makes sure that one has not committed the mistake oneself—one makes sure that a property is assigned correctly in the respect considered.

On the basis of such observations about book 5, one can plausibly think that, although the commonplaces presented in book 6 are described from the destructive perspective, they can be easily changed into, and used as, constructive ones. Do they offer methods for establishing definitions, however? Let us consider first whether book 5 offers sufficient methods for establishing property.[84]

[83] One of the other commonplaces states that, for destructive criticism, one must see whether the property assigned does not always accompany the subject (131ª27–8). For constructive argument, on the other hand, one must see whether the property assigned does always accompany the subject. For instance, one who has stated that it is a property of 'virtue' to be 'that which makes its possessor good' has assigned as a property that which always accompanies the subject, and hence assigned a property correctly in this respect (κατὰ τοῦτο) (131ª34–ᵇ4).

[84] According to Brunschwig (*Aristote: Topiques I–IV*, p. lxv), the commonplaces described from a constructive perspective in book 5 do not suffice for establishing a property. 'the only method they authorize would be to apply successively to the property the series of approximately fifty commonplaces; if it is shown that a property is not open to attack under each of these commonplaces, one can admit that it is not open to attack under any of them' (my translation). Brunschwig remarks that (1) such a 'dialectical marathon' would be difficult to put into practice, and moreover, that (2) the opponent could always pretend that it had not been demonstrated that the series of tests was complete. This second objection can be answered, however, by appeal to the co-operative nature of dialectic: the good dialectician, I have argued, does not hinder the common task but rather contributes to the good discussion. As far as the first objection is concerned, it should be noted that although many commonplaces a dialectician *can* use are enumerated, this does not mean that he has to go through *all* of them in every dialectical discussion. It seems sufficient that he uses an appropriate commonplace when he finds some fault with the property assigned by his opponent. Moreover, if it were true that he must go through all the commonplaces, this often would not be so difficult in practice since the tasks ascribed by most of the commonplaces are not very complex. For instance, it does not take much time and effort to see that one who asserted that 'to be very like the soul' is a property of 'fire' used terms which are less knowable ('for

The first commonplace in book 5, as remarked before, advises one, for constructive purposes, to see whether the property assigned is stated in terms which are more knowable ($129^{b}1$–5). For example, if one has asserted 'possessed of sensation' as the property of a 'living creature', one has employed more knowable terms and hence 'possessed of sensation' would in this respect (*κατὰ τοῦτο*) have been correctly assigned as a property of 'living creature' ($129^{b}26$–9).

Another commonplace states that, for constructive purposes, one must see whether the property does concur with each individual (one 'must see whether the property [assigned] is true in every case and in the particular respect in question': $132^{a}35$–6). For example, if one concludes that 'a living creature receptive of knowledge' is a true description of every man *qua* man, it would be a property of man to be 'a living creature receptive of knowledge' ($132^{a}36$–$^{b}3$).

These commonplaces seem to offer advice for *testing* whether what has been assigned as a property is correct rather than a method for *establishing* property. For they do not specify how one arrived at the property assigned, e.g. in the first example considered, how one arrived at the property 'possessed of sensation'. Or how is it that one assigned 'a living creature receptive of knowledge' as a property of 'man'?[85]

we know better what "fire" is than what "soul" is') and has not assigned a property correctly in this respect (example given at $129^{b}9$–13). Some commonplaces ascribe more complex and more time-consuming tests than the one mentioned above. But they should not be too time-consuming for those who are well prepared for a dialectical debate. That is yet another reason why Aristotle emphasizes the necessity of preparing oneself for dialectical discussion (for example, in 8. 14 one is advised to 'learn arguments dealing with questions of frequent occurrence' ($163^{b}17$–18)) and the choice of the right person for discussion. The reasons Brunschwig offers for his claim that commonplaces in book 5 do not provide sufficient methods for establishing a property are therefore answerable. However, his claim itself seems to be supported by other considerations which are presented in the main text.

[85] Similar thoughts arise while considering the commonplaces described in book 4, which is devoted to genus. Although in book 4 most commonplaces are described from the destructive perspective, they can be changed and used for constructive purposes. However, even then they seem to be designed to be used for testing whether something proposed as genus is correct rather than for establishing genus in the first place. For example, one of the commonplaces advises one to see, for destructive purposes, whether the genus and the species fail to fall under the same category, for 'the genus must fall under the same category as the species'. For example, if one states that 'white' is the genus of 'swan', it is clear that one

The same questions arise about commonplaces in book 6. One of the commonplaces advises one, for destructive purposes, to see whether the opponent failed to apply everything which comes under the subject of definition. This commonplace can be changed into the constructive one: one must see, then, whether the definition is applied to everything which comes under the subject of the definition. For instance, changing the example cited by Aristotle from the destructive to the constructive argument: if one defines 'grammar' as 'the knowledge of reading and writing from dictation' one has applied the definition to everything which comes under its subject and hence one has defined correctly in this respect ($142^b30–5$). Again, as in the case of other examples, this commonplace does not offer means for establishing the definition but solely the means of testing whether the definition stated is correct.[86] One might ask again: how is it that one arrived at the definition of grammar in the first place?[87]

It is clear on the basis of the above examples that one needs some additional methods in order to establish definitions and other predicables. In order to find out what these methods are, it is helpful to look at book 1 of the *Topics* and other works of Aris-

has not stated the genus correctly, for swan is a substance and white is a quality ($120^b36–9$). This commonplace can be changed into, and used for, constructive purposes. Then one would have to see whether the genus and the species succeed in falling under the same category. For example, if one states that 'colour' is the genus of 'white' one has stated genus correctly in this respect, for both colour and white fall under the same category: quality. But although the destructive commonplace Aristotle describes can be used for constructive purposes, it does not offer a method for establishing that 'colour' is the genus of 'white' and only a method of checking whether what has already been proposed as genus is correct.

[86] Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism*) analyses a great number of commonplaces, especially the ones which use Platonic examples. Also, according to him they present 'rules for testing dialectical propositions by determining whether or not the predicate stands to the subject in relation of genus (including differentia), property, definition, or accident' (1).

[87] In 7. 3 Aristotle offers commonplaces for constructing a definition. They describe how to establish a definition from an already existent one but they do not specify how one arrives at the latter definition in the first place. For example, the second commonplace for the construction of a definition refers to inflexions and co-ordinates. We are told that if it is admitted that 'forgetfulness' is 'a loss of knowledge', one is committed to admitting also that 'to forget' is 'to lose knowledge' and that 'to have forgotten' is to 'have lost knowledge' ($153^b26–30$). But here one might wonder how one established that 'forgetfulness' is 'a loss of knowledge' in the first place.

totle in which remarks about the discovery of first principles are made.

In *Topics* 1. 13 Aristotle mentions four ways which are useful for building syllogisms: one should (1) make a collection of propositions; (2) distinguish many senses of a particular expression; (3) discover differences and (4) investigate similarities (105^a21–5).

(1) In 1. 14 we find out that the propositions one should select are *endoxa* and other modes of thought which are similar to them.[88] (2) In 1. 15 Aristotle recommends methods by which one can examine whether an expression is used in one or several meanings. For example, one should investigate the genera of the things which fall under the same term and see whether they are different and not subordinate one to another;[89] and one should consider whether there is ambiguity in definitions (107^b6–12) or in differentiae.[90]

Aristotle explains in 1. 18 (108^a18–37) that discriminating different meanings of a term is useful for the sake of clarity of the argument, 'in order that [one's] reasoning may be directed to the actual thing and not to the name by which it is called' (108^a20–2), for avoiding being misled by fallacious reasoning and for—although this is not, as Aristotle remarks, a proper method in dialectic—misleading the opponent.

(3) As far as investigating differences is concerned, Aristotle recommends examining the differences between subjects which are closely connected—those within the same genus and those between genera which are not much removed from one another (107^b38–108^a4).[91] The discovery of differences is useful when one reasons about sameness and difference and when one wants to know the

[88] *ἐκλέγειν μὴ μόνον τὰς οὔσας ἐνδόξους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ὁμοίας ταύταις* (105^b4–5).

[89] For example, *ὄνος* ('donkey') is both the animal and the machine (that is, the windlass: LSJ, s.v.), and they should be described differently: one as a kind of animal and the other as a kind of machine. However, if the genera are subordinate one to another, the descriptions are not necessarily different; for example, both 'animal' and 'bird' are the genera of 'raven', and when one states that 'raven' is 'a flying biped animal' one is stating that it is a bird—in this case both the genera are predicated of it (107^a18–31).

[90] For instance, if the term is used as a differentia for two genera which are distinct and not subordinate one to the other, one should note that it will be an equivocal term: for example, the meaning of 'sharp' when applied to voice is different from when 'sharp' is applied to a solid substance, and hence 'sharp' is an equivocal term (107^b19–26).

[91] Aristotle adds: 'where the genera are widely separated, the differences are quite obvious' (108^a4–6).

essence of the thing (*πρὸς τὸ γνωρίζειν τί ἕκαστόν ἐστιν*) because, Aristotle explains, we come to know it by recognizing the differentiae which are peculiar to it ($108^{a}38$–$^{b}6$).

(4) As far as examining similarities is concerned, Aristotle advises one to search for the attribute which is common to all the species of the same genus (e.g. man, horse, dog, etc.) and also to compare genera which are widely separated ($108^{a}7$–17). The consideration of similarities is useful, as Aristotle indicates in 1. 18 ($108^{b}7$–34), for inductive arguments, because one infers the universal, by induction, from similarities between particulars; for hypothetical reasoning, because it is plausible (*endoxon*) to think that what happens in any one string of similar cases will also happen in the rest; and for assignment of definitions, because if one finds out what is the same in all particular cases, one is able to ascertain to what genus the subject considered belongs ('for, of the common predicates, that which falls most definitely in the category of essence must be the genus': ($108^{b}22$–3).[92]

The above methods of detecting ambiguity and investigating similarities and differences are helpful for building propositions in a dialectical debate. They are also useful, as indicated above, for finding definitions. But it is clear that they themselves presuppose some other, even more fundamental, methods. For one is not able to distinguish differences or find similarities without perceiving and reflecting upon a number of particular cases. Below I shall consider the methods Aristotle offers for the discovery of first principles in his other writings. In my presentation of them, I shall rely, to a large extent, on the results of investigations by other scholars.

It has been demonstrated by McKirahan (*Principles and Proofs*, ch. XVIII) and Scott (*Recollection*, section II)[93] that perception, mem-

[92] Also, if we are dealing with definitions of widely separate subjects, knowledge of similarities will enable one to discover useful analogies and thus to obtain at least approximate definitions. For instance, one may observe that 'a point on a line and a unit in number are the same thing' because each is the starting-point. Hence 'the starting-point' is the genus in both cases on the basis of which one can, as many philosophers do, form tolerable definitions of 'unit' as 'the starting-point of number' and of 'the point' as 'the starting-point of line' ($108^{b}22$–31).

[93] See especially Scott's excellent account of *Post. An.* 2. 19 (*Recollection*, sect. II, ch. 4). The main claim he argues for is that, in this chapter, Aristotle is not, as some commentators claim, interested in developing an account of ordinary cognitive learning but in explaining how we arrive at higher knowledge of first principles.

ory, induction,[94] and experience (*empeiria*) play an essential role in the process towards the discovery of first principles. By making individual observations (based on perception), recording (memory), and collating them (*empeiria*),[95] a scientist is able to attain the state of *nous* which is the culmination of the process of the discovery and which is equivalent to the identification of first principles.

It has been emphasized by Wieland and Scott that for Aristotle the path to knowledge is not a path from not knowing to knowing but a movement from one form of knowing to another.[96] In other words, the process from the more knowable to us to the more knowable in nature is a continuous one.[97] Although in some passages Aristotle draws a sharp distinction between these two stages of the process (e.g. in *Metaph. A* 1 and *Post. An.* 2. 19), in *Phys.* 1. 1 and *Post. An.* 2. 8 he tries to bring out the continuity between them.

In *Phys.* 1. 1 the journey from the more knowable to us to the more knowable in nature is characterized, as remarked before, as the journey from undiscriminated or blurred concepts to a more articulated level of understanding.[98] It is important to note, as Scott emphasizes, that this epistemological journey consists in the articulation of something already grasped: the blurred concept we start off with is already an unrefined version of the scientific concept.

In *Post. An.* 2. 8 the continuity between the two stages of the journey is brought out even more emphatically:

[94] For considerations on induction (*epagōgē*) see McKirahan (*Principles and Proofs*, 250–7). It is interesting to note that in *Top.* 1. 12 induction is identified, alongside syllogism, as a kind of dialectical argument and described as the more convincing and clear of the two. It is more knowable from the point of view of perception, and appropriate to use in dialectical discussions with the many (105^{a}10–19).

[95] See Scott, *Recollection*, 111–13, for considerations on the meaning of experience (*empeiria*) and the suggestion that it refers to collected 'observations of empirical observers' (112).

[96] In *Posterior Analytics* we are told that 'All teaching and learning . . . proceeds from pre-existent knowledge' (71^{a}1–2). See Scott, *Recollection*, sect. 11, ch. 3, for Aristotle's rejection of Plato's theory of recollection.

[97] It is perception which starts the process off and, as Scott remarks on the basis of *Post. An.* 99^{b}37–9 (*Recollection*, 119), for Aristotle perception is a kind of pre-existent knowledge.

[98] Scott (*Recollection*, ch. 6) demonstrates that both in ethics and in science the movement from the more knowable to us to the more knowable in nature is 'a progression from a state where a vague or hazy concept is grasped to one in which the concept is more clearly articulated' (135).

as to whether [something] exists, sometimes we grasp this incidentally, and sometimes by *grasping something of the object itself*—e.g. of thunder that it is a sort of noise in the clouds; and of an eclipse that it is a sort of privation of light; and of man that it is a sort of animal; of soul that it is something which moves itself.

When we know incidentally that something exists, necessarily we have no grasp on what it is; for we do not even know that it exists, and to seek what something is without grasping that it exists is to seek nothing. But when we grasp something of the object, the business is easier. *Hence in so far as we grasp that it exists, to that extent we also have some grasp on what it is.* ($93^{a}21$–9)[99]

We are told above that one may grasp that something is in two ways: properly and incidentally. In the former case, in grasping the fact we grasp 'something of the thing itself'; that is, we partially grasp the essence of the thing ('we . . . have some grasp on what it is'). This may involve, for example, grasping the genus to which the object belongs (e.g. we grasp 'of man that it is a sort of animal'). It is because of this, Scott emphasizes, that one's grasp of the fact (that is, the more knowable to us) is a reliable starting-point for the discovery of the first principles.[100]

Owing to one's proper grasp of the fact, one partially grasps the essence. But what one grasps, let us recall, is only a blurred and pre-technical concept, and much work needs to be done in order to progress from this level of understanding to the articulation of the definition. Below, I shall spell out how dialectic and other methods considered earlier are helpful for establishing definitions.[101]

[99] This is Scott's translation (*Recollection*, 126; emphasis added). See also Bolton, 'Definition and Scientific Method', 130–42, for a discussion of this passage.

[100] The passages in *Phys.* 1. 1 and *Post. An.* 2. 8 analysed above show that while proceeding from the more knowable to us to the more knowable in nature we never leave the realm of knowledge (*γνῶσις*). This is why, as Scott points out, 'it is appropriate to use the expression "the more *knowable* to us"; even at the start of an inquiry, our cognitive state can be described in terms of knowledge (*γνῶσις*)' (*Recollection*, 124 n. 14).

[101] It seems that definitions can be established at two different stages of a dialectical debate. (1) One may need to establish a definition while arguing about some other issue; for example, while arguing for a claim that 'wisdom is worthy of choice' it may be useful to define what wisdom is. (2) The dialecticians may decide to have a debate about a definition. A definition has then to be stated at the beginning of a dialectical debate: that is, it has to be expressed as a dialectical problem which will be considered, e.g. 'Is "pedestrian biped animal" a definition of man, or not?' (an example of a dialectical problem given by Aristotle at $101^{b}32$–3). It is also possible that the latter case (2) incorporates the former (1); for example, while trying to

At the end of book 6 Aristotle remarks:

> In dealing with any definition, it is a most important elementary principle to make a shrewd guess in one's own mind at the definition [πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εὐστόχως ὁρίσασθαι] of the object before one or else to take over some well-expressed definition [καλῶς εἰρημένον ὅρον ἀναλαβεῖν]. For it necessarily follows that, with a model, as it were, before one, one can see anything that is lacking which the definition ought to contain and any needless addition, and thus be better provided in the points of attack. (151^{b}18–23)

Although this advice is presented from the destructive point of view, it is not difficult to see that it might be used for constructive purposes. Then one should make a shrewd guess at a definition or take some well-expressed definition and explore it in a dialectical debate. Commonplaces will be useful for testing whether the definition stated is correct, whether the definition needs some additions, or whether it is wrong and should be abandoned.

One might object here that taking some well-expressed definition or especially making a shrewd guess about it is not a reliable way to start the process of discovery. However, if these are viewed in the light of Aristotle's ideas about the discovery of truth mentioned earlier, they do not seem so unreliable any more.

The advice to consider some well-expressed definition acquires more significance when viewed in the light of Aristotle's attitude towards the investigation of *endoxa*. Since, as he believes, 'everyone has something to contribute to the truth', considering and testing someone else's definition is likely to lead to the discovery of elements of truth. Aristotle himself, while presenting advice in the commonplaces, explores the definitions proposed by other philosophers, especially Plato.[102]

Making a shrewd guess can also be seen as a good way to begin the process of discovery. Perception, memory, collating observations, and noticing similarities and differences, mentioned before as the methods which lead towards the discovery of first principles, can be thought of as important stages which precede making such a

establish that 'pedestrian biped animal' is a definition of man it may be useful to define what an animal is.

[102] See Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism*, ch. 1, for considerations on Aristotle's criticisms of Plato in the *Topics*.

guess. A person who states a definition is, after all, a perceptive and reflective creature and it is obvious that he would use his powers to reflect and perceive before making, and in order to make, such a guess.

Perception and reflection upon similarities and differences can be seen, in the case of some predicables, as satisfactory for making a correct guess. For example, it seems that in order to state that 'colour' is the genus of 'white' one does not need any other, more sophisticated, methods.[103] This becomes even more apparent if one takes into account *Post. An.* 2. 8, where Aristotle remarks that in grasping the fact properly, we partially grasp its essence (for example, we grasp that 'a man is a kind of animal'). In the same way, it seems plausible to think, we are able to grasp that 'colour' is the genus of 'white'. Then, in a dialectical debate, by applying the commonplaces relating to genus (described in book 4), the dialecticians are able to test whether this original grasp of genus was correct.

Definition, since it requires stating both the genus and differentia, may often be more difficult to grasp or to make a shrewd guess about. In some cases finding it requires much experience and expertise. For example, one needs expertise in order to suggest a definition of thunder as 'a noise in the clouds due to quenching of fire in the sky', a definition of phlegm (considered by Aristotle at $140^{b}7$–15), or a definition of a complex term e.g. of a 'finite straight line' ($148^{b}23$–32).

In some cases, however, finding a definition does not seem too challenging. For example, one should define 'wisdom' as 'virtue of the reasoning faculty' ($145^{a}28$–33), 'blindness' as 'a privation of sight in the eye' ($147^{b}34$–$148^{a}2$), appetite (ἐπιθυμία) as 'the desire for the apparently good or pleasant' ($147^{a}1$–2). Although these definitions do not seem too difficult to find, it is easy to make a mistake while formulating them: for example, when one defines 'blindness' (and any privation in general), one may forget to state 'what it is which is deprived' (that is, that it is the eye which is deprived of sight) and when defining appetite one may

[103] Wieland, *Aristotle's Physics*, 130, remarks that 'the things [which are] better known "by nature", to which inquiry eventually leads, are often very trivial and simple' and that Aristotle emphasizes the easiness of discovery of first principles in *Metaph.* *α* 1 on the grounds that we possess background knowledge ('everyone can say something about the nature of things': $993^{b}1$ ff.).

forget to add that it is the desire for the *apparently* pleasant.[104] The commonplaces are designed to detect mistakes of this sort. But, let us note, it is also useful to know the commonplaces *in advance*; that is, before formulating, or making a guess at, a definition, as this is likely to preclude one from committing a mistake of this sort. For although the commonplaces, as has been shown before, do not offer sufficient methods for establishing definitions (and other predicables), they are helpful for such purposes.

For example, it is useful to know that definition has to consist of terms which are more knowable in nature (information given by the first commonplace (141^a26–142^a16) in book 6); that one should not define by means of opposites (and that there are exceptions to this rule: for example, double cannot be defined without half) (142^a22–33); that one should not define a superior by means of subordinates (e.g. 'the good' as 'a state of virtue' for 'virtue is a kind of good') (142^b11–19); that in some cases one must not forget to add the quantity or quality (e.g. 'what is the quality and quantity of honour which one desires that makes a man ambitious; for all men desire honour, and so it is not enough to say that a man who desires honour is ambitious, but the above-mentioned differentiae must be added': 146^b21–4).

As far as the differentia is concerned, the commonplaces described in book 6 offer some basic but essential information for establishing it. For example, it is useful to know that 'a specific differentia, combined with the genus, always makes the species' (143^b8–9); that, as is generally held, the differentia always signifies, not a particular thing, but a quality (144^a20–2); that a differentia can never belong to something accidentally (144^a23–7); and that the differentia of a relative term is also relative (145^a13–18).[105]

The person who possesses knowledge of the rules expressed in the above and other commonplaces is less likely to make a mistake while 'guessing' or formulating a definition (or another pred-

[104] Aristotle explains this advice: 'often those who feel desire fail to perceive what is good or pleasant, so that the object of their desire is not necessarily good or pleasant, but only apparently so' (147^a2–4).

[105] Definition states differentia and genus. The commonplaces relating to genus are described in book 4. Aristotle reminds the reader of this fact in book 6: 'if the term which has been described is not placed in its appropriate genus, you must examine it according to the elementary rules regarding genera' (143^a12–14).

icable). If he made a mistake, however, a dialectical discussion should be helpful for pointing out what is wrong with the description offered as a definition. While testing it on the basis of the commonplaces, it should become clear whether it is totally wrong and should be abandoned or whether it is wrong in some respect. In the latter case a dialectical discussion should be useful for suggesting ways one could modify and improve it. For example, if one stated that 'grammar' is 'the knowledge of writing from dictation', it should become apparent, while testing this description on the basis of the commonplace described at $142^{b}30–5$, that one should add that grammar is also 'the knowledge of reading'. In this case, it is shown that the description stated was not a definition. But by virtue of the dialectical discussion, the dialecticians have improved their understanding: the modification of the original description has been offered and they have ended the dialectical debate with knowledge of the definition of grammar.

The above line of thought suggests that a dialectical discussion can lead to the discovery of definitions indirectly: that is, as a by-product of examining some description which is only allegedly a definition. It might have been, however, assuming one used properly the methods (perception, induction, memory, reflecting upon similarities and differences, etc.) which lead to the discovery of definitions, that the description offered is a correct definition. In 7. 3 ($153^{a}14–15$ and $153^{a}23–4$) Aristotle states, let us recall, that it is possible to reason out a definition in a dialectical debate. Let us consider how this happens on the basis of his hints in book 7.[106]

At the beginning of 7. 5 Aristotle explains why it is difficult to construct a definition:

[106] According to Brunschwig (*Aristote: Topiques I–IV*, pp. lxix–lxxii), books 6 and 7 do not provide a consistent account as to how one reasons out definitions. According to him, book 6 and the passage at the end of 7. 5 ($155^{a}18–22$), on the one hand, and 7. 3 (especially $153^{a}15–22$) and the passage at the beginning of 7. 5 ($154^{a}24–9$), on the other hand, provide different conceptions of definitions: a vertical conception in the case of the former and a horizontal one in case of the latter. Brunschwig concludes that the former passages were written earlier and that the latter were introduced to the *Topics* later 'when Aristotle was no longer guided by the principles which initially governed his enterprise' (p. lxx). In the remaining part of this section I try to show in what way the passage at the beginning of 7. 5 is consistent with the one at the end of 7. 5. On the other hand, 7. 3, as Brunschwig claims, presents a different way of syllogizing a definition. I shall try to explain why.

for oneself to discern, and to secure from those who are being questioned, the sort of premisses which one requires is far from easy: for example, that the constituent parts of the description given are, first, genus and, second, differentia, and that the genus and differentiae are predicated in the category of essence. But without these premisses it is impossible to have a syllogism of a definition. (154ª24–9)

At the end 7. 5, in the course of stating why it is most difficult to construct a definition, Aristotle says:

One has to establish all the assertions by syllogizing (namely, that the attributes asserted belong, and that what has been assigned is a true genus, and that the description is peculiar), and, besides this, that the description shows the essence of the thing, and this must be done properly. (155ª18–22)

The above two passages differ to some extent. They describe slightly different ways in which one can construct a definition. The way offered by the former passage is slightly more complex: it refers to the conception of definition in book 6.[107] But, although these two passages are slightly different, they both point out what conditions need to be fulfilled in order to construct a definition. Moreover, if the definition fulfils the requirements set up by the former passage, it will also satisfy the requirements of the latter. For if the description offered states genus and differentia, and if they are predicated in the category of essence (as is specified in the former passage), then it will also be certain that the attributes asserted belong and that the description is peculiar (as is required by the latter passage).

Another way in which the above passages are similar is that according to both of them it is difficult to construct a definition because one needs to establish (and, as we are told in the former passage, secure from the answerer) several elements of the definition, e.g. genus and differentia (as stated in the former passage). That stress is laid on the fact that a definition consists of several (at least two) elements is in conformity with the spirit of 7. 5. The reason why it is difficult to construct a definition but easy to destroy it is that, as Aristotle spells out just after the former passage (154ª24–9), 'it is easier to come to one conclusion than to *many* [πολλά]' (154ª32–3): in order to destroy a definition 'it is enough

[107] At the beginning of this book (139ª24–35) Aristotle points out five requirements a definition needs to fulfil.

to argue against a single point', whereas in order to construct it 'it is necessary to establish that *all things* [πάντα] in the definition are applicable' (154ª34–6).

Since, in order to syllogize a definition, one needs to syllogize several elements, e.g. genus and differentia (those which are predicated in the category of essence), it is plausible to think that one needs to reason them out separately. Let us envisage that the questioner wants to reason out a definition of 'man'. He may take 'a well-expressed' Aristotelian definition of 'man' as 'rational mortal animal' and test it in a dialectical debate. Since this definition consists of three elements, he needs to reason them out separately. For example, he may try to build the following two syllogisms:

(1) Things possessing perception are animals.
(2) Men have powers to perceive.
∴ (3) Men are animals.

(1) Those animals which can speak meaningfully are rational.
(2) Men can speak meaningfully.
∴ (3) Men are rational.

In the above syllogisms one has secured two elements of the definition: genus and differentia which are predicated of 'man' in the category of essence. Let us assume that one has also built the third syllogism, which shows that 'men are mortal'. Has one then syllogized a definition? In a sense, one already has: one has secured the elements of the definition—one has shown that man is 'rational' and 'mortal' and that man is 'animal'. In another sense, however, one has not: although one has syllogized *the elements* of the definition, one has not syllogized *the whole* definition. Since the definition consists of several elements, it seems right to think that, in order finally to syllogize it, one has to combine them. I think this is what Aristotle tries to do in 7. 3. There he offers a final *unifying* syllogism of the definition:

> For if a definition is a description which indicates the essence of a thing, and the predicates in the definition ought also to be the only ones to be predicated of the thing in the category of essence (and the genera and differentiae are predicated in the category of essence), it is obvious that, if one were to assume that A and B were the only attributes predicated

of the thing in the category of essence, then the description containing A and B would necessarily be a definition; for nothing else can possibly be a definition, since nothing else is a predicate of the thing in the category of essence. (153^a15–22)

In the above passage, as Brunschwig remarks, the syllogism constructed has as a major premiss the definition of the definition and, as a minor premiss, the enumeration of all essential attributes of the object defined.[108]

(1) The definition is a formula which states essential attributes of a thing defined.
(2) 'Rational', 'mortal', and 'animal' are the essential attributes of 'man'.
∴ (3) The definition of 'man' is a formula which states that 'man' is 'rational mortal animal'.[109]

I have presented the examples of three syllogisms which are needed in order to syllogize a definition. Let us note that if these three syllogisms are taken as a whole—i.e. as one complex syllogism—the premisses of this complex syllogism are more knowable to us than the conclusion. For example, the premisses that 'men can speak meaningfully' and that 'men have powers to perceive' are based on collected observations of what is given in perception.[110] The syllogism thus proceeds in accordance with the OP.[111]

I have tried to present a consistent picture of Aristotle's account

[108] Brunschwig (*Aristote: Topiques I–IV*, p. lxix): 'Le syllogisme ainsi construit a pour majeure la définition de la définition, et pour mineure l'énumération complète des attributs essentiels de l'object à définir . . .' Such a syllogism, as Brunschwig remarks, was criticized by Aristotle himself in *Post. An.* 2. 6 (92^a6–19). See also Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism*, 34–6, and Barnes, *Aristotle:* Posterior Analytics (Oxford, 1994), 212–14, for comment.

[109] See Barnes, (*Aristotle:* Posterior Analytics, 212, for a more formal presentation of such a syllogism.

[110] One of the premisses of the above syllogism of a definition of 'man' expresses a dialectical rule: that is, the definition of definition. For those good dialecticians who know dialectical rules well, this premiss is more knowable than the conclusion which they want to establish. But this premiss, since it is the definition of definition, is also most knowable in nature. I have argued earlier in this section that it is possible that such premisses are conceded by the answerer who possesses an accurate and superior understanding. For him, they are as knowable as the more knowable to us.

[111] Another form of the OP would be in a syllogism which proceeds from the more knowable in nature to the less knowable in nature, as in the case of demonstration.

of reasoning out definitions in book 7 (and book 6). The conceptions of the syllogism of definition in 7. 3 and 5 are different because they describe, as explained above, different kinds of syllogisms: one for syllogizing the elements of the definition and the other for combining them. These two kinds of syllogism are needed in order to achieve a unified and complete picture of how one syllogizes definitions in a dialectical debate.

It has been shown that it is possible to syllogize definitions in dialectic. Such a process, as has been demonstrated, presupposes using other methods. Perception, making and collating observations, applying induction, finding out ambiguities, discovering similarities and differences, and in some cases some expertise etc. are useful for finding out the elements of definitions (e.g. genus and differentia) and the premisses which lead to establishing such elements. The commonplaces are helpful in order to test whether the definition and its elements which have been stated are correct, and also for avoiding committing mistakes while establishing them.

Whether one discovers a definition depends on whether one uses the methods mentioned above properly. To this extent, a dialectical search for definitions is similar to a philosophical search: in both it is possible to make mistakes which will preclude one from establishing a correct definition. However, in contrast to 'one-person' philosophical search, in dialectic establishing a definition depends ultimately upon the concessions of one's interlocutor. In dialectic it is possible that although the questioner has found the correct definition and the premisses which lead to the possibility of its being established, this correct definition will not be established. For it is possible that the answerer will behave awkwardly and not concede the premisses which the questioner needs for his argument.

One way of dealing with this problem is, for the questioner, to proceed in accordance with the OP: that is, to find, and put forward for conceding, the premisses which are more *endoxa* than the conclusion and ideally the premisses which are most *endoxa*. Such premisses are likely to be conceded by the answerer under pain of social blame. We have seen, however, that so minimalist an interpretation of the function of the OP does not capture the whole truth. It has been demonstrated that not only the questioner but also the answerer proceeds in accordance with the OP.

Moreover, in Section 4 we have seen that the answerer should concede only those premisses which lead to the questioner building the strongest argument for a given conclusion. Surely the answerer would not do so if he were concerned only with avoiding social blame. The reason, it has been argued, why both dialecticians follow the OP and try to build the strongest argument for a given conclusion is that by doing so they proceed from a less to a more articulated level of understanding. In this way they are able to decide what is true and what false and thus to accomplish the common task.

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ARISTOTLE ON POSTHUMOUS FORTUNE

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CAN a person be harmed or benefited after death, even if there is no afterlife? Bizarre as the idea may sound, there are intuitions in its support. If, for instance, events after a person's death bring about the demise of some venture to which they devoted all their energies, or if terrible misfortunes afflict their children, we might feel that this detracts from the success of their own life; we might even feel inclined to pity them.

Philosophical treatment of this issue goes back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1. 10–11, where he asks whether posthumous events can affect a person's *eudaimonia* ('happiness'). Unfortunately, his treatment of this issue has proved extremely perplexing. Some of his commentators take him to be entertaining the notion that the dead can be conscious of what happens to their reputation and to their descendants. At same time, they agree that Aristotle's own psychology leaves no room for such post-mortem consciousness. Yet, if he is not talking about the souls of the departed in Hades and still maintains, as he seems to, that the dead can be affected posthumously, exactly what kind of effects does he have in mind? Both the question that Aristotle raises in 1. 10 and the answer that he gives in the subsequent chapter raise difficult problems. In this paper I wish to show how they can be resolved. In the course of doing this, we shall see how the question of posthumous effects, at first sight something of a philosophical curiosity, takes one deep into the mainstream of Aristotle's ethics.

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1. *Eudaimonia* and fortune

Since the question of posthumous effects arises as part of a wider discussion of *eudaimonia* and fortune in *NE* 1. 8–11, we need to start by outlining Aristotle's definition of *eudaimonia* and his views on the relation between *eudaimonia* and fortune.

The 'function' argument of 1. 7 describes *eudaimonia* as activity of the rational soul in accordance with virtue (1098[a]16–17), and the identity of *eudaimonia* with activity of some kind is reasserted at several points throughout the rest of the book, often in the course of the fortune chapters themselves.[1] Scholarly opinion is famously divided as to which virtue or virtues Aristotle ultimately has in mind. In the light of 10. 7–8 one can ask whether the life of virtue involved in *eudaimonia* is contemplative, practical, or both. One possibility is that Aristotle eventually identifies perfect *eudaimonia* only with contemplative virtue, and thinks of the activity of the practical virtues (justice, courage, etc.) as constituting a secondary form of *eudaimonia*. Alternatively, perfect human *eudaimonia* may consist in both moral and contemplative activities, as many scholars now think. For our purposes, however, we can leave this problem on one side: throughout *NE* 1. 8–11 Aristotle clearly locates human beings in the political sphere and works against the background of a practical conception of *eudaimonia*.[2]

If *eudaimonia* is identified with virtuous activity, to what extent is it affected by fortune, good or bad? This leads directly to the question of how far it depends upon 'external goods' (e.g. health, money, or honour), the possession of which is to some extent a matter of fortune. Aristotle's view is that external goods provide the means and the opportunities for the exercise of the virtues: to act generously, for instance, we need both money and a social context to provide a source of potential benefactors (1. 8, 1099[a]31–[b]8). Here it is important to bear in mind that *eudaimonia* consists not merely in having the virtues, but in using them. Someone deprived of possessions and friends may still have all the virtues but, unable to act in accordance with them, will stop short of enjoying *eudaimonia*.

In this paper I shall assume that the only contribution that externals make to *eudaimonia* is to provide the means and opportunities

[1] Cf. 1099[a]29–31, 1099[b]26, 1100[a]13–14, 1102[a]5–6.

[2] See e.g. 1099[a]10–20, 1100[b]11–14.

for virtuous activity. This view has been contested by those who think that externals also constitute intrinsic parts of *eudaimonia*. This interpretation, however, clashes with the fact that Aristotle so frequently identifies *eudaimonia* with virtuous activity in book 1. One passage particularly worth mentioning is 1. 8, $1098^{b}12$–20, where he draws a contrast between internal and external goods, and insists that *eudaimonia* 'falls among goods of the soul *and not among external goods*'. If he really thought that to an extent it does consist in externals, it would be strange for him not to confess to it here.[3]

2. The puzzles

Having talked generally about the relation between *eudaimonia* and fortune in *NE* 1. 8–9, Aristotle narrows his focus in 10–11. Just at the end of 1. 9, he cites an example of someone who in his last years fell victim to terrible misfortune, King Priam of Troy, and asserts that no one would call him happy ($1100^{a}5$–9).

This example prompts the question that opens the next chapter: should we follow Solon's advice and call no one happy until he is dead? Aristotle immediately clarifies this question: Solon did not mean that in the period after death the person is happy. This possibility is quickly rejected: 'is this not quite absurd, especially for us who say that *eudaimonia* is an activity? ($1100^{a}13$–14)[4] Instead, Solon is taken to mean that, once people are dead, we can assess them as having been being happy or not. This point about tenses

[3] For a defence of the view that externals contribute to *eudaimonia* only as means and opportunities for virtuous activity see J. M. Cooper, 'Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune', *Philosophical Review*, 94 (1985), 173–96. Those who give externals a greater role and adopt a broader account of *eudaimonia* tend to cite 1. 7, $1097^{b}16$–21: see e.g. J. L. Ackrill, 'Aristotle on *eudaimonia*', in A. O. Rorty (ed.), *Articles on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley, 1980), 15–33 at 21, and T. Irwin, 'Permanent Happiness: Aristotle and Solon', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 3 (1985), 89–124 at 93. This text can, however, be reconciled with the narrower definition of *eudaimonia* as virtuous activity: see esp. R. Crisp, 'Aristotle's Inclusivism', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 12 (1994), 111–36; also D. T. Devereux, 'Aristotle on the Essence of Happiness', in D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Studies in Aristotle* (Washington, 1981), 247–60 at 256–60; T. D. Roche, 'The Perfect Happiness', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 27, suppl. (Proceedings of the Spindel Conference, 1988), 103–125 at 117–18; and D. J. Scott, 'Primary and Secondary *eudaimonia*', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. 73 (1999), 225–42 at 236–8.

[4] Translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are by W. D. Ross, rev. J. O. Urmson, in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* [*Aristotle*] (Princeton, 1984), with occasional modifications.

is stressed again at 1100ª33–4, where Aristotle expresses Solon's advice as 'we must see the end and only then call a man blessed, not as being blessed, but as *having been so before*'. So the question raised by Solon's advice concerns the assessment of the person in their life-time: the 'ante-mortem' person.[5]

It is at this point that the problem about posthumous events arises. It appears, Aristotle remarks, that honours and dishonours, as well as the good and bad actions of someone's children and descendants, seem to have an effect on the dead person (1100ª18–21). He then sets up a dilemma by imagining someone who has lived happily until old age and has died appropriately, but whose descendants then suffer varying fortunes. It would be absurd to allow the *eudaimonia* of dead people to fluctuate according to the fortunes of their descendants; but it would also be absurd to deny that the fortunes of the children have some effect on the parent (1100ª22–30). At this point, Aristotle turns back to consider Solon's advice; by doing so, he suggests, we may also be able to make some progress with the problem of posthumous events.

In trying to determine precisely what is at issue in this problem, some commentators think that Aristotle is asking whether the dead have any perception of events after their lifetime.[6] Even if this was a debated issue in and before Aristotle's time,[7] it is clearly not what is at issue here. For one thing, Aristotle defends the idea of posthumous effects by drawing the following comparison: 'for both evil and good are thought to exist for a dead man, as much as for one who is alive *but not aware of them*' (1100ª18–20). So even if he

[5] Here I agree with Irwin's rendering of 1100ª15–17: 'Solon's point is . . . that when a human being has died, we can safely pronounce [that he was] blessed [before he died] on the assumption that he is now finally beyond evils and misfortunes.' See T. Irwin (trans.), *Aristotle:* Nicomachean Ethics [*Ethics*], (Indianapolis, 1985), 24, and G. Pitcher, 'The Misfortunes of the Dead', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 183–8 at 185.

[6] See A. Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, 2nd edn. (London, 1866), i. 390; J. A. Stewart, *Notes on the* Nicomachean Ethics *of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1892), i. 149; R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque* [*Éthique*] (Louvain, 1959), ii. 78–9, 85. For more recent interpreters see K. Pritzl, '*Nicomachean Ethics* I. 10–11: Aristotle and Happiness after Death', *Classical Philology*, 78 (1983), 101–11; P. W. Gooch, 'Aristotle and the Happy Dead', *Classical Philology*, 78 (1983), 112–16. At least J. Burnet, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1900), 49, seems clear that Aristotle is not discussing the consciousness or otherwise of the dead.

[7] On the conflicting views about the afterlife and whether the dead were conscious see J. D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill and London, 1983), 74–82.

were thinking about souls in Hades, he would not be asking about whether they can be affected by hearing good or bad news of their descendants.

There are two further reasons why Aristotle cannot be worrying about souls in Hades at all. First, recall the way he clarified Solon's advice, quickly brushing aside the suggestion that the person after his death might be *eudaimōn*. It would be quite bizarre if, having ruled out that possibility in the context of the first problem, he relied upon it to set up the second. Rather, he continues to think about the ante-mortem person and asks whether an event that happens after death can in any way affect how we assess the *eudaimonia* of this person.[8]

The second reason for thinking that Aristotle is considering the *eudaimonia* of the ante-mortem person is this. On the one hand, he himself accepts that the dead can be affected in some way.[9] On the other, he cannot have believed that the individual 'moral' self survives death: he states clearly in 10. 8, 1178^{a}9–23, that this is bound up with the existence and functioning of the body. Even if the theoretical intellect survives, this is not enough to explain how one can be affected by what happens to one's children.

Given that Aristotle is asking whether the posthumous events affect the question of the *eudaimonia* of the ante-mortem person, we can relate the two questions of the chapter as follows. In the first, he asks whether we need to wait right until the end of a person's life before it is safe to judge them as having been happy. In the second he presses this same line of enquiry: perhaps even the moment of death is premature, and the moment of judgement should be pushed further into the future.

Although the subject of this paper is Aristotle's answer to the problem of posthumous fortune, it is also important to understand how he replies to Solon, given the close connection he sees between the two problems (1100^{a}31–2).

[8] See Irwin, *Ethics*, 308, on 1100^{a}27–30.

[9] Some commentators have tried to deny Aristotle's commitment to posthumous events influencing the dead: see e.g. Gauthier and Jolif, *Éthique*, ii. 78–9, 86; P. W. Gooch, 'Aristotle and the Happy Dead', 115–16. Yet, although Aristotle does not allow posthumous events to impinge on a post-mortem consciousness, he does think it absurd to deny any sort of posthumous effects (1100^{a}29–30; cf. also 1101^{a}22–4, ^{b}5–9).

3. Solon's advice

Asked by Croesus to name the happiest person he knew, Solon cited an Athenian called Tellus, whose city and children had prospered in his lifetime, and who had died gloriously on the battlefield. Second in rank were two brothers, Cleobis and Bito, who died after performing a glorious deed. The point of the story is that, rich as Croesus is, his own fortunes are uncertain.[10]

In discussing Solon's advice, Aristotle is dealing with a paradigm example of an *endoxon*, a view held by one of the most reputable among the wise and, in accordance with his usual procedure, he is reluctant to reject the advice straight out. He agrees that *eudaimonia* must involve a considerable degree of permanence. To put the matter in his own terms, *eudaimonia* requires a sustained period of virtuous activity.[11]

The crucial difference between Aristotle and Solon is over whether *eudaimonia* requires an *entire* life of success. This requirement is clearly rejected in the course of the chapter. At $1100^{a}34$–$^{b}4$ he says that although we should not think of *eudaimonia* as something that fluctuates easily, we should not go to the opposite extreme and deny it to someone who is genuinely happy at a certain time. This implies that *eudaimonia* can truly be predicated of someone for some period of their life, whatever may happen later on within it. The same point emerges at $1101^{a}8$–13 when he commits himself to the possibility that someone can have *eudaimonia* for some period of their life, lose it, and even regain it again, although in each case the fluctuation would require a considerable change in circumstances.

In steering a course between disallowing fluctuations and allowing them too easily, Aristotle remains true to his view of *eudaimonia* as activity in accordance with virtue. *Eudaimonia* is not easily attained, because it presupposes the acquisition of virtue, a long and difficult process. Nor is it easily lost: the virtues are enduring features of character and, although *eudaimonia* requires activity, which can be impeded by bad fortune, it is the mark of great character to be able to make the best of bad materials ($1100^{b}30$–$1101^{a}6$). Only the worst misfortunes will stem virtuous activity in such a way as to prevent *eudaimonia*.

So Aristotle's response to the case of Priam is this: we are right

[10] Herodotus 1. 30–2. [11] See e.g. $1098^{a}18$–20, $1100^{b}2$–3.

to say that, at the end of his life, he was no longer *eudaimōn*. The disasters that afflicted him deprived him of family, friends, and, in general, a political context and left him unable to engage in the kind of virtuous activity he enjoyed before. But although the disasters deprived him of *eudaimonia* for these final years,[12] they did not undermine the fact that he was happy earlier on. This is why we do not have to wait for the end to assess the person for *eudaimonia* at earlier periods. Provided that someone has engaged in virtuous activity over a certain length of time, there is no room for retrospective assessments in the light of later misfortunes and reversals. This point will be crucial for understanding Aristotle's solution to the problem of posthumous fortune.

4. The dead

In 1. 11 Aristotle begins his treatment of the second problem by restating the plausibility of the view that posthumous events have some effect on the dead.[13] Reluctant to give up this widely held view, he proceeds as follows. He does not propose to supply a detailed solution, but notes that we must take into account a number of distinctions: just as events in one's own life can have greater or lesser effects, so too events in one's friends' lives can affect one more or less. Then we should ask whether such events happen while one is alive or after; this makes a great difference, just as it makes a great difference whether in a tragedy a crime is actually shown on stage or is assumed to have happened as part of the background to the plot. He now presents his final view:

> For it seems, from these considerations, that even if anything whether good or evil penetrates to them [the dead], it must be something weak and negligible, either in itself or for them, or if not, at least it must be such in degree and kind as not to make happy those who are not happy or to take away their blessedness from those who are. The good or bad fortunes of friends, then, seem to have some effects on the dead, but effects of such a kind and degree as neither to make the happy unhappy nor to produce any other change of the kind. (1101^{b}1–9)

[12] He will not, however, lose his virtue: although he may not engage in virtuous activities, he will not do anything vicious either. See 1101^{a}6–8, with M. C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge, 1986), 333–4.

[13] Cf. 1101^{a}22–4, with 1100^{a}18–21.

On the standard reading of this passage, Aristotle is conceding that posthumous events can affect someone's *eudaimonia* to some degree: they can improve or tarnish it, but they cannot make a 'threshold' difference between whether we attribute *eudaimonia* to someone or not: that question is settled by what the person did in their lifetime.[14]

Part of this interpretation raises a serious problem. We have seen that, in the course of book 1, Aristotle repeatedly identifies *eudaimonia* with virtuous activity. If so, how can it be affected posthumously at all? Here it is important to remember that the activity that constitutes *eudaimonia* is choiceworthy for its own sake: the goal of such activity lies in itself ($1105^{a}32$; $1140^{b}6$–7). We shall examine this point further below but, as it stands, it runs against the standard interpretation of 1. 11. If the goal of the activity is internal, and if someone has engaged in virtuous activity throughout their life, how can later events have the slightest bearing on that person's *eudaimonia*?

A further problem in allowing posthumous events to have slight effects on *eudaimonia* is that to do so would risk undermining Aristotle's response to Solon. At 1. 11, $1101^{a}31$–3, he says it makes a great difference whether some event, e.g. one's children suffering a serious misfortune, takes place during or after one's death. If he goes on to say that such events, when posthumous, have a slight effect on the person's *eudaimonia*, surely he should reopen the question about whether events that occur later within a person's life can affect the *eudaimonia* of its earlier stages. Because these later events happen 'on stage', as it were, their effect will be much greater, and so there is no obvious reason why they should not be able to make a threshold difference to the *eudaimonia* of the earlier stages. Yet his response to Solon does not allow for this possibility.

So, on the standard interpretation of 1. 11 Aristotle's solution to the second problem is inconsistent with his answer to the first, and with his account of *eudaimonia* as virtuous activity. Perhaps this should be seen as an example of where he fails to achieve the objectives inherent in his method. He wants to preserve the intuition that posthumous events have an effect, but in doing so falls out of line with his own theory.

There is, however, another reading of 1. 11 which avoids these problems altogether. As Richard Kraut has pointed out, at no point

[14] See e.g. Irwin, *Ethics*, 27.

does Aristotle say that the *eudaimonia* of the dead person is in any way affected. He talks only of the person being affected.[15] There are in fact five separate places where he mentions the possibility of posthumous effects, two in 1. 10 and three in 1. 11;[16] in not one of them does he talk of the person's *eudaimonia* as what is affected: where this is specified, it is always simply the person himself. With ample opportunity to say that *eudaimonia* can be posthumously affected, he pointedly fails to do so.[17] Perhaps, then, Aristotle's view is that posthumous events can affect our assessment of some aspects of a person, without having a bearing on their *eudaimonia*.

Aside from the fact that it renders 1. 11 consistent with Aristotle's view of *eudaimonia*, this reading has a further advantage. Recall the suggestion made at 1100^{a}31–2, that the answer to Solon's problem might also help with the question about posthumous events. In his answer to Solon Aristotle rejected the idea that misfortunes at later stages within a life can undo the *eudaimonia* of earlier stages. This, as we have just seen, does indeed have implications for how to answer the second question: if events that take place later on within a life cannot affect the person's *eudaimonia* at earlier parts, then *a fortiori* (1101^{a}31–3) what happens after the life has ended cannot affect whether the person was happy within it. In fact, given the way in which Aristotle has responded to Solon's advice, the question of any posthumous effect on *eudaimonia* can no longer arise.

This explains an important detail about the way Aristotle returns to the second problem at the beginning of 1. 11. Originally the problem took the form of a dilemma: one horn was constructed out of the claim that the dead are affected by certain kinds of posthumous event (1100^{a}18–21), the other out of the claim that *eudaimonia* cannot fluctuate (1100^{a}28–30). When he returns to the problem in 1. 11, he simply ignores the second horn, and discusses only the proposition that constituted the first to see in what way it can be preserved: 'That the fortunes of descendants and of all of a person's friends have no effect at all seems a very unfriendly doctrine, and one opposed to the opinions held.' This single-track approach

[15] R. Kraut, *Aristotle and the Human Good* (Princeton, 1989), 151.

[16] 1. 10, 1100^{a}18–19, 29–30; 1. 11, 1101^{a}22–3, ^{b}1–2, 5–6. In his translation Ross in Barnes, *Aristotle*, 1740, inserts the word 'happiness' into the opening sentence of 1. 11 (1101^{a}22–3) without any warrant from the Greek.

[17] Notice also that, in making distinctions between the different kinds of ways events can have an effect (1101^{a}28–^{b}1), he still stops short of describing these as effects on *eudaimonia*.

makes sense if he is now taking it for granted that allowing *eudaimonia* to fluctuate with the descendants' fortunes in any way at all is ruled out, and that the only way forward is to grasp the first horn. Thus this chapter is devoted only to allowing that there can be some truth in the claim that the dead are affected without us having to say that their *eudaimonia* can change.

So as long as we do not take Aristotle to be saying that posthumous events affect the *eudaimonia* of the dead, we can explain the way he proceeds in dealing with the original dilemma and render his answer consistent with his theory of *eudaimonia*. Yet we are still left with a mystery: Aristotle is affirming the possibility of certain posthumous events affecting our assessment of the person before death. What exactly does he have in mind?[18] Perhaps we can understand why he does not pursue this problem in *NE* 1. 10–11: he is concerned specifically with *eudaimonia* and its relation to fortune. Once he has dealt with the question of whether *eudaimonia* can be affected posthumously, he is entitled to move on to other questions about *eudaimonia*. What I wish to do, however, is to ask whether the *Nicomachean Ethics* provides any answer to the question of how he could have tackled the issue.

5. *Praxis* and *poiēsis*

To make headway with this issue, we need to focus upon the kind of activity in which *eudaimonia* consists. As we saw above, the reason why a person's *eudaimonia* itself cannot be affected posthumously is that it consists in activity, and the goal of this activity lies in itself; *eudaimonia* is achieved in the performance of certain activities and does not have to wait for later events in order to be secured.

In certain places Aristotle uses the term *praxis* to refer to an action whose goal lies in itself, and draws a contrast with a type of action that he terms *poiēsis* ('production'), whose goal lies outside

[18] Perhaps we should point to the way in which someone's reputation can be posthumously affected. If a person is slandered after their death, we can say that, although their *eudaimonia* is unaffected, some other aspect of them undergoes change. This answer may seem attractive in the light of the way Aristotle initially sets up the problem, where he includes reputation among the factors thought to affect one posthumously (1100^{a}20). Yet, although honour is mentioned here, it is dropped from the discussion thereafter; 1. 11 makes reference only to the fortunes of friends and descendants (1101^{a}22–4). So it would be unwise to pursue this approach further.

itself—e.g. the house lies outside the act of building.[19] Now, the fact that Aristotle sees morally virtuous actions as cases of *praxis* rather than *poiēsis* introduces an important complication into his theory. On the one hand, he is quite insistent that *praxis* and *poiēsis* are distinct; also, that one is not a species of the other (1140^{a}5–6). On the other, it is natural to think of the virtuous person as aiming at some state of affairs beyond the action itself: the generous person aims at the prosperity of his friends, the courageous at peace and security for his city. Aristotle himself describes virtuous actions in just this way. In *Rhet.* 1. 9 he calls virtue a 'faculty of benificence' (δύναμις εὐεργετική), which provides and preserves good things (1366^{a}36–8), and, as he goes on to describe the different virtues individually, he calls some of them 'productive' (ποιητική) of certain results (1366^{b}16, 17, 19).

It may seem puzzling that Aristotle insists on the distinction between *praxis* and *poiēsis* while also allowing that the virtuous agent may be engaged in both. There is, however, no ultimate incoherence here. An agent may work towards a goal that lies beyond himself (e.g. someone else's safety). At the same time, to act for the sake of someone else's good is noble (*Rhet.* 1. 9, 1366^{b}36–8), and so, in the very acting with a view to that person's good, the agent achieves the noble, which is itself a goal. Thus, the agent who works towards the external goal also now has another goal, the noble, which is internal to his action. As Christine Korsgaard puts it:

> When we say that the courageous person sacrifices himself in battle for its own sake, we need not be denying that he sacrifices himself for the sake of his country. It is the whole package—the action along with its purpose, sacrificing yourself for the sake of your country—that is chosen for its own sake.[20]

[19] 1140^{a}1–6, ^{b}6–7; cf. 1094^{a}16–18.

[20] C. M. Korsgaard, 'From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action', in S. Engstrom and J. Whiting (eds.), *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty* (Cambridge, 1996), 203–36 at 216. Aside from *Rhet.* 1. 9, another place where Aristotle treats virtuous actions as productive and as having an external goal is 10. 7, 1177^{b}1–18. This passage is also notorious for appearing to deny that morally virtuous activity is choiceworthy for itself. One solution to this problem is that when Aristotle says that virtuous activities (*praxeis*) are not choiceworthy for themselves (^{b}16–18), he is not using the term *praxis* in the richer sense that we have been discussing, viz. what Korsgaard calls 'the whole package—the action along with its purpose', but just one component of that package—the action without its purpose. (There is a question about whether a more detailed account of the relation between the agent's external and internal goals can be extracted from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. One possibility is that they

Without collapsing the difference between *praxis* and *poiēsis*, therefore, Aristotle holds that a virtuous agent typically aims at some state of affairs beyond his action. *Praxis* and *poiēsis* go hand in hand.[21]

This point will be crucial for understanding the way in which Aristotle thinks the dead can be posthumously affected. Before showing this, however, I need to clarify what kinds of success are required to achieve the goal of the *praxis* in which *eudaimonia* consists. First, the virtuous agent must be cognitively successful. He must judge where the mean lies—what, in the particular circumstances, is noble; he also needs a good deal of empirical knowledge about how to bring about the external results at which he aims.[22] Second, we saw above that Aristotle requires more than the mere possession of the virtues; they must be exercised, and this requires that the agent be successful in procuring the relevant instruments and opportunities.

But it is not necessary to impose a further condition on successful *praxis*—the achievement of external goals. Consider someone who risks his life on the battlefield to save his city. Fighting for this cause constitutes a certain type of activity. Such activity is engaged in, obviously, whether or not the battle is actually won and security obtained for the city. This is clear from Aristotle's discussion of 'the noble' in *Rhet.* 1. 9: 'Noble also are those actions whose advantage may be enjoyed after death, as opposed to those whose advantage is enjoyed during one's lifetime; for the latter are more likely to be for one's sake only' (1367^{a}1–4). In general, success at achieving the internal goal of *praxis,* the noble, involves acting for the sake of an external goal, but not necessarily achieving it. This ties in with the response to Solon in 1. 10. Since Aristotle allows us to attribute *eudaimonia* to someone during one period of their life

are related as first- and second-order goals respectively. Nevertheless, important as this topic would be in a broader discussion of Aristotle's ethical theory, it will be sufficient for solving the specific problem of posthumous fortune merely to establish *that* the virtuous agent has both types of goal.)

[21] Again, this raises a further question, though not one that needs to be answered for the purposes of this paper: does he think that there are two separate events happening at the same time, or one event that can be described in two ways? For a discussion see D. Charles, 'Aristotle: Ontology and Moral Reasoning', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 4 (1986), 119–44 at 130 n. 18.

[22] Cf. 1104^{b}34, 1141^{b}15–18. On the kind of cognitive success required by the virtuous person see T. Irwin, 'Virtue, Praise and Success: Stoic Responses to Aristotle', *The Monist*, 73 (1990), 59–79 at 61–2.

without knowing what disasters may be in store, he cannot believe that successful *praxis* has to wait upon future events: some of the external goals associated with *praxis* may be longer-term (especially in the case of someone engaged in political activity on the grand scale), and the future disasters mentioned in 1. 10 may well include the frustration of such goals; what Aristotle is allowing in his answer to Solon, therefore, is that someone can engage in successful *praxis* even though the associated external goals are not achieved.

It is important not to exaggerate this point. I am not suggesting that it is at all likely that someone could attain *eudaimonia* through a long period of successful *praxis* even though the majority of their external goals were frustrated. Achieving the external goal associated with one *praxis* (e.g. the survival of the city) will very often provide the means and opportunities for later *praxeis* (e.g. political activity), and accumulation of productive failures may well impede one's ability to engage in successful *praxis*. (Also, the fact that someone has practical wisdom—involving the relevant empirical knowledge—and manages to put their plan into action at least raises the likelihood that they will succeed in many of their external goals.) Over a period of time, therefore, productive success will typically accompany successful *praxis* and *eudaimonia*. Nevertheless, the link between success in the two types of activity remains indirect, and a *praxis* can be complete before its external goal is achieved—indeed, without it ever being achieved.

All this helps us to make progress with our original problem. It reinforces the point that *eudaimonia* cannot be affected posthumously; at the same time, the fact that there may be productive ventures left incomplete at death opens up a way of understanding how some aspect of a person, other than their *eudaimonia*, can be affected posthumously.

6. Friendship and productive success

To find out how Aristotle thinks the fortunes of children and friends can affect the dead, we need to look more closely at his views on certain types of friendship relations, specifically those that obtain between older and younger people. A particularly important passage is *NE* 9. 7, which concerns the relation between benefactors (*εὐεργέται*) and their beneficiaries, focusing on the question of why

benefactors love their beneficiaries more than the other way round. He insists that the benefactor loves his beneficiary even if he gets no use from him, and explains the fact by describing the benefactor as 'productive' ($1168^{b}31$) and the beneficiary as his product:

> This is what happens with craftsmen too; every man loves his own handiwork better than he would be loved by it if it came alive; and this happens perhaps most of all with poets; for they have an excessive love for their own poems, doting on them as if they were their children. This is what the position of benefactors is like; for that which they have treated well is their handiwork [*ἔργον*], and therefore they love this more than the handiwork does its maker. ($1167^{b}33$–$1168^{a}5$)[23]

He then gives a deeper explanation as to why the producer loves his product:

> The cause of this is that being is to all people a thing to be chosen and loved, and that we *are* by virtue of actuality [*ἐνεργείᾳ*], i.e. by living and acting, and that the handiwork [*ἔργον*] *is*, in a sense, the producer in actuality; he loves his handiwork, therefore, because he loves being. And this is rooted in the nature of things; for what he is in potentiality, his handiwork manifests in actuality. ($1168^{b}5$–9)

Here Aristotle makes a tight association between the goal or 'product' of the benefactor's *poiēsis* and his actuality. All this is elaborated at greater length in *Metaph.* *Θ* 8, $1050^{a}4$–$^{b}3$, in a discussion of the priority of actuality to potentiality, where we also find that the agent rises to actuality in achieving his goal (his *ἔργον* and *τέλος*: $1050^{a}21$–2). In other words, the potential *F* becomes an actual *F* on achieving its *ἔργον*. Aristotle goes on to distinguish cases where the goal of the action lies within it from those where it lies beyond it. To illustrate the first he cites seeing (animals have the capacity to see so that they themselves can see) alongside contemplation and *eudaimonia* itself ($1050^{a}34$–$^{b}1$); as examples of the other kind of activity he uses building and weaving ($1050^{a}31$–3), as well as teaching ($^{a}17$–21). There is also implicit a further distinction within this type, in that some examples of products are inanimate, but, as the teaching example shows, he is quite happy to apply the notion of production to interactions between human beings.

[23] It is important to note that the benefactor of 9. 7, as well as having an external productive goal, aims at the noble and so is to be seen as an example of a virtuous agent (cf. $1168^{a}9$–18). This chapter, therefore, gives us an example of someone engaging in both *praxis* and *poiēis*.

Although he allows for such distinctions, the same point about the actuality being achieved in the goal is applied quite generally: while an animal *qua* perceiver reaches full actuality in the very exercise of sight, the builder is actualized in the thing that is built, and the teacher in the learner (1050^{a}31–2; cf. ^{a}17–21). The idea in *Metaph.* Θ 8 that the producer reaches his actuality in the product reappears in *NE* 9. 7 as the claim that the benefactor is 'in some way' the beneficiary (1168^{a}7).

For our purposes, it is important that Aristotle accepts the following line of thought: whether someone is a successful *F* depends on whether they achieve their goal or ἔργον, i.e. whether they rise to full actuality. In cases where the goal lies outside the action, the actuality and so success of the agent depends on something located beyond the person. Applied to the context of *NE* 9. 7, the claim is that whether the benefactor is successful depends on a separately existing beneficiary.

We must now ask more exactly what is involved in the production that takes place in the beneficiary. *NE* 9. 7 seems to be making a general point about any friendships where there is some type of dependence of one party on the other. A particularly common instance of this relation is that between parents and their children. In fact, Aristotle has already used parents, particularly mothers, as examples of benefactors who love their beneficiaries more than vice versa (8. 12, 1161^{b}26–7), and in 9. 7 itself, just at the end, parents are again invoked as an example (1168^{a}24–6). In talking of the benefits that parents bestow on their children, he includes, of course, physical nurture, but also education with a view towards 'doing well' (εὖ πράττειν).[24] Another case of the benefaction which involves working towards successful *praxis* in the beneficiary is the ruler who benefits his subjects, again so that they can do well (εὖ πράττειν: 1161^{a}13; cf. 1102^{a}9). For Aristotle, it is the goal of the statesman to have his citizens do fine and virtuous actions (1099^{b}29–32). So the idea of a benefactor whose goal is the *praxis* of others, either his children or fellow citizens, is familiar enough in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

[24] 1161^{a}17, 1162^{a}7; cf. also 10. 9, 1180^{b}6, which mentions the beneficence (εὐεργεσία) of a father in the context of moral education. These passages confirm the view of M. Pakaluk, *Aristotle:* Nicomachean Ethics, *Books VIII and IX* (Oxford, 1998), 185, that, for Aristotle, the goal of human reproduction is 'a good human being, not simply a human being'. This is especially applicable to 9. 7, where the benefactors are presented as acting nobly (see previous note) and are therefore all the more likely to be concerned to produce virtuous actions in their children or protégés.

This now puts us in a position to explain how Aristotle thinks one can be affected posthumously. Virtuous agents will be engaged in benefiting other people, often aiming at the successful *praxis* of their friends. Whether this activity is successful, whether they reach full actuality *qua* producers, depends on whether their protégés do in fact engage in successful *praxis*. The benefactor's aim is quite broad: he wants the protégé to flourish over an extended period of time. Consequently, the goals of this type of production may stretch well beyond the producer's lifespan. Aristotle is quite explicit about this in the passage quoted above from *Rhet.* 1. 9, 1367[a]1–4, where he describes noble actions as those 'whose advantage may be enjoyed after death'. This applies particularly when someone else's *eudaimonia* is the benefactor's external goal: as we saw early on, *eudaimonia* requires a long period of virtuous *praxis*.

So posthumous effects on certain aspects of a person become intelligible on Aristotle's theory. If the lives of the dead person's children and friends are beset by misfortunes, and their own *praxis* badly impeded, the parent's own *poiēsis* will have been frustrated. To be more precise, it is possible for Aristotle to explain how posthumous events may affect the ante-mortem person in the following way: the good actions of protégés and descendants make it true that the life of the ante-mortem person was a success in productive terms.[25]

[25] This account of posthumous effects is in line with Pitcher's view in 'The Misfortunes of the Dead', 188. He points out that the expression 'makes true', when used in such contexts, is non-mysterious and in no way involves an appeal to backward causation. He gives a helpful parallel: 'If the world should be blasted to smithereens during the next presidency after Ronald Reagan's, this would make it true (be responsible for the fact) that even now, during Reagan's term, he is the penultimate president of the United States.' This also shows how the recent 'desire satisfaction' theory of success can explain posthumous benefit and harm. According to some versions of this theory, a life is successful when one's (strongest) desires are *actually* fulfilled, even if, sometimes, one is unaware of their fulfilment. For example, if someone wants her children to prosper and, unbeknown to her, they do, her desire is fulfilled and her life goes better as a result. Since many of our desires may be satisfied only after our death (e.g. desires relating to children and friends), the success of a life may be determined posthumously: see D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford, 1984), 495, who says that a success theorist would agree if asked 'Do you want it to be true, even after your death, that you *were* a successful parent?' (my emphasis). See also J. Griffin, *Well-being*, (Oxford, 1986), 22–3. R. C. Solomon, 'Is there Happiness after Death?', *Philosophy*, 51 (1976), 189–93, gives an account of *NE* 1. 10–11 in terms similar to these more recent theories. Unfortunately, he presents a very distorted view of Aristotle. For one thing, he assumes that *NE* 1. 11 does allow *eudaimonia* itself to be affected posthumously; he then seeks to explain this by foisting upon Aristotle a desire-satisfaction account

Yet, in allowing this, we can still maintain that the person's *eudaimonia* is settled. The *praxis* in which they engaged alongside their *poiēsis* does not, as we saw, presuppose productive success to achieve its goal: if Aristotle distinguishes *praxis* and *poiēsis* along the lines suggested above, he can also keep separate the questions of someone's *eudaimonia* and of their success as a benefactor. To allow a person to be affected posthumously is neither inconsistent with Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia* as *praxis*, nor mysterious.

It might seem natural to end the story here. Nevertheless, strange as it may seem, we need to reopen the question about the posthumous effects on the *post*-mortem person.

In 1. 10 Aristotle confines himself to talking about the ante-mortem self when asking whether someone's *eudaimonia* could be affected posthumously; in the following chapter he goes on to deny that there can be such effects on the *eudaimonia* of the ante-mortem self, while allowing that in some sense the person can be affected posthumously. Now it may seem natural to suppose that when he allows for this possibility he must still be thinking about some sort of effects upon the *ante*-mortem self. This inference appears to be supported by one of the points I made above: he did not believe that the individual 'moral' self survives death in such a way as to be a subject of *eudaimonia*. For all this, our discussion of friendship and production has tacitly introduced the possibility of post-mortem existence, albeit of a very different kind from the one just mentioned.

Think again of the relation between producer and product—between the teacher and the learner, for example. Both reach their actuality *at the same time*. That is why a teacher likes to exhibit his pupils using their knowledge, for that is when the teacher is at the highest level of actuality and being *qua* teacher (*Metaph.* Θ 8, $1050^{a}17$–21). This is closely linked to the rather startling claim in *NE* 9. 7 that the product is, in a sense (πως), the producer in actuality ($1168^{a}7$). Again, this suggests that the producer's actuality is attained at the same time as the product's. But Aristotle goes further and suggests that somehow the producer acquires a surrogate existence in the activities of the product: this point is vital to the context of the whole passage, because Aristotle seeks to explain the

of *eudaimonia*. But although it *involves* the satisfaction of some desires, *eudaimonia* does not *consist in* the satisfaction of any desires, but in the fact that one engages in virtuous activity.

love that benefactors have for their beneficiaries. In fact, the idea that the friend and beneficiary is 'another self' is already familiar in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and has been mooted in another passage touching on parental love:

> parents love their children as being a part of themselves, and children their parents as being something originating from them. Now parents know their offspring better than their children know that they are their children, and the originator is more attached to his offspring than the offspring to their begetter; for the product belongs to the producer (e.g. a tooth or hair or anything else to him whose it is). . . . Parents, then, love their children as themselves, for their issue are by virtue of their separate existence a sort of other selves. (1161^{b}18–29)

This has important implications for the issue of posthumous effects. As we have seen, the benefactor's goals stretch beyond the confines of his actual lifetime; he works to ensure that his products flourish well after his own death. If we couple this point with the notion of the product as 'another self', we can see how there is a place in Aristotle's theory for post-mortem existence. The producer achieves his highest level of actuality *qua* producer beyond the grave in the activities of his product. The beneficiary is separate from the benefactor, but he is still, according to Aristotle, another *self*: in this case, a post-mortem self. It is important to note, however, that in so far as the benefactor does survive in his other selves, it is only *qua* producer, not as a subject of *praxis*. Hence there is no way that this undermines Aristotle's original strictures on post-mortem *eudaimonia*, a possibility dismissed as 'completely absurd' at 1100^{b}13–14.

I said above that it might seem strange to reintroduce the possibility of post-mortem existence, given that Aristotle had confined his discussion of posthumous effects on *eudaimonia* to the ante-mortem self. But when he allows that some aspect of a person, other than their *eudaimonia* and *praxis*, is vulnerable to posthumous events, there is actually no reason to expect him to limit his focus to the ante-mortem person. Of course, he does not believe in the post-mortem survival of a self that might engage in *praxis*, but what we have just been discussing is something quite different—the productive self.[26]

[26] The possibility of surviving in the actions of someone else has been used to explain Aristotle's position in 1. 10–11 by Crisp, 'Aristotle's Inclusivism', 135, who argues that Aristotle does allow for post-mortem *eudaimonia* and for it to be affected

In the end, therefore, there are two ways to explain the possibility of posthumous effects: more prosaically, we can claim that later events determine whether the life of the ante-mortem person was productively successful. Such an explanation is available to Aristotle. But a closer look at the most relevant texts suggests that he takes a more exotic approach and allows a post-mortem self to survive in its friends. Perhaps we can detect the voice of Aristotle's own great benefactor living on in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[27]

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slightly by posthumous events. He imagines two friends jointly engaged in some project; one of them dies, leaving the other to carry on with it. On the basis of 9. 9, 1170^{a}3–4, Crisp claims that one friend's *praxis* is also another's, and so that the *praxis* of the dead person continues in that of the surviving friend. Hence the dead person's *eudaimonia* can be affected to an extent, since he still participates, albeit weakly, in *praxis*. My objection to this approach is that it has the person *still* participating in *praxis* and *eudaimonia* after death, whereas I have argued that Aristotle is discussing the *eudaimonia* of the ante-mortem person. (I am also very doubtful as to whether 1170^{a}3–4 is enough to show that one person's *praxis* can be another's.) If, however, Crisp had talked about the post-mortem survival of someone through their productive activity, there would have been less distance between us.

[27] The notion of surviving in one's 'products' is familar from Plato's *Symposium*. At 207 A 6–209 E 4 Diotima claims that even if genuine immortality is not an option for us, we can attain a surrogate, whether by having children, writing poems, or engaging in other kinds of creativity.

EPICUREAN IMMORTALITY

JAMES WARREN

I

τὸ γὰρ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον ζῷον πεπληρωμένον τε πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ κακοῦ παντὸς ἄδεκτον, ὅλον ὂν περὶ τὴν συνοχὴν τῆς ἰδίας εὐδαιμονίας τε καὶ ἀφθαρσίας ἀνεπιστρεφές ἐστι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων.
(Aetius 1. 7. 7, p. 300 Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* [*DG*] = 361 Us.)

THE study of Epicurean theology is, and has been for some time, a battleground. Great effort has been expended in the discussion of what, and how *θεοὶ . . . εἰσίν* (*Ep. Men.* 123),[1] but despite the vast majority of writing on this topic being concerned with the ontological and epistemological issues which arise from Epicurean theism, the major role played by the gods in Epicurus' thought is ethical. They are, however they 'are', perfect Epicureans in the sense that they enjoy constant pleasure. Their life is an ideal to which

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[1] The debate centres around the interpretation, comparison, and acceptance or rejection of a small number of passages, especially *KΔ* 1 (and the scholion added to it in Diogenes Laertius) and Cic. *ND* 1. 49. Various Herculaneum papyri in various editions are also often offered in support of a particular interpretation. In general, discussion has centred around the physical constitution of these gods, and two major camps have emerged. The first, the 'realist' interpretation, thinks that Epicurean gods are indeed solid living organisms which are found somewhere outside our cosmos. The second, the 'idealist' view, thinks that gods are human thought constructs, and exist physically only in the form of streams of thought (*eidōla*) which humans receive. There is a useful summary of the debate in J. Salem, *Tel un dieu parmi les hommes: L'Éthique d'Épicure* (Paris, 1989) [*Tel un dieu*], 188–204. While this discussion is not central to my concerns here, some of my comments have a bearing on it. Where relevant, the issues will be pursued in the footnotes (see esp. n. 10).

all Epicureans aspire. Of course, to advocate such *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ* was not of itself particularly new. In their various ways Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics might be said to say something similar.[2] But they base their versions of 'becoming like god' on other portions of their systems which are absent from Epicureanism. Here we find no transcendent realm of 'Forms'; no soul leaving the body to commune with these 'Forms'; no metaphysical architecture of potentialities and activities; no immanent providential divine *logos*.[3] These absences ensure that the Epicurean claim that mortals, compounds of constantly moving and shifting atoms, might, when they attain the *human* goal of *ἀταραξία*, be said to assimilate to these gods remains intriguing. An Epicurean human can now, when alive, when attaining his human goal, be called godlike. What follows will be part of the search for the grounding of this claim. Some grounding appears to be necessary unless we confine the promise of Epicurean *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ* to mere rhetoric. If by 'god' all that Epicurus intends is 'the ethical ideal for human life', then of course one who attains that ideal is godlike, but this is merely a trivial consequence. Nothing in particular is conveyed by making this a 'divine' state.[4] It certainly appears that Epicurus intended to give some force and content to his affirmation of the divinity of the human who achieves *ἀταραξία*, but what that content might be is relatively unexplored.

ταῦτα οὖν καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῆ μελέτα πρὸς σεαυτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς πρὸς ⟨τε⟩ τὸν ὅμοιον σεαυτῷ, καὶ οὐδέποτε οὔθ' ὕπαρ οὔτ' ὄναρ διαταραχθήσῃ, ζήσῃ δὲ ὡς θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις. οὐθὲν γὰρ ἔοικε θνητῷ ζῴῳ ἄνθρωπος ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς. (*Ep. Men.* 135)

Practise these things, and things similar to them, to yourself by day and by night ⟨and⟩[5] to one [*or* what] is like yourself, and never either waking

[2] See e.g. M. J. O'Brien, 'Becoming Immortal in Plato's *Symposium*' ['Becoming Immortal'], in P. E.Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (Chico, 1984), 185–205; D. N. Sedley, '"Becoming Like God" in the *Timaeus* and Aristotle' ['Becoming Like God'], in T. Calvo and L. Brisson (eds.), *Interpreting the* Timaeus–Critias*: Proceedings of the IV Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustin, 1997), 327–39.

[3] Cf. F. Decleva Caizzi, 'The Porch and the Garden: Early Hellenistic Images of the Philosophical Life', in A. W. Bulloch *et al.* (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1993), 303–29; G. Giannantoni, 'Epicureismo e l'ateismo antico', in G. Giannantoni and M. Gigante (eds.), *Epicureismo greco e romano* (Naples, 1996), 21–63 at 35–6.

[4] Cf. P. Merlan, 'Zwei Fragen der epikureischen Theologie' ['Zwei Fragen'], *Hermes*, 68 (1933), 196–217, who argues at 215 that if a 'human life' is *essentially* full of pain and anxiety, then to reach a state where there is no pain or anxiety is to be non-human, i.e. immortal.

[5] *τε* suppl. Usener. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*

or sleeping will you be disturbed, but you will live like a god among men. For a man living in immortal goods is quite unlike a mortal creature.

At the climax to the epitome of ethical advice and exhortation which is the *Letter to Menoeceus*, this forms a rousing finale. Still, it is not just a good piece of rhetoric. The thought with which Epicurus closes his letter can be found restated elsewhere. The Epicurean wise man is indeed divine. 'Dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus', says Lucretius of Epicurus (5. 8)—a phrase which immediately introduces a number of paradoxes. The tense of the verb is remarkable. Perhaps it suggests that Epicurus was, and is no longer, divine. Further, in the proem to book 6 of the *De rerum natura* Epicurus is clearly mortal (*virum*, *genuere*, *exstincti*), and at the only place where Epicurus is named, he is emphatically dead (3. 1042).[6]

Nevertheless, one of the *Vatican Sayings* insists that we can all attain divine *eudaimonia*:

σαρκὸς φωνὴ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ δψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥιγοῦν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἔξειν κἂν ⟨Διὶ⟩ ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαιτο. (*Gnom. Vat.* 33)[7]

The cry of the flesh is to feel no hunger, no thirst, no cold. For someone possessing and expecting to possess these would even rival Zeus in happiness.

How can the absence of pain in a human be said to rival the happiness of Zeus? Why does such a human live among 'immortal goods'? Why does he not appear to 'live a mortal life'?

I begin with a myth. A story is told by Aphrodite to Anchises (*HH Aphr.* 218 ff.). Dawn, a goddess, fell in love with Tithonus. He was mortal, but 'like the immortals' (219 *ἐπιεἰκελον ἀθανάτοισι*). She asks Zeus to grant her a wish, that her love be allowed 'to be immortal and to live for ever' (221 *ἀθάνατόν τ' εἶναι καὶ ζώειν ἤματα πάντα*). This Zeus grants, but the foolish goddess had made a mistake. For while Tithonus was youthful they lived together happily, but soon he began to grow old. He continues to grow old still, prevented by Zeus' gift from the release of death. Dawn leaves

(Cambridge, 1987), ii. 152, omit it (cf. i. 146). Cf. Lucr. 5. 1170–1, S.E. *M.* 9. 25 for suggestions that divine visions during sleep are more vivid.

[6] See esp. M. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), 79, 191–207. Cf. D. Clay, 'The Cults of Epicurus', *Cronache ercolanesi* [*C.Erc.*], 16 (1986), 11–28; A.-J. Festugière, *Épicure et ses dieux*, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1946), 94 ff.

[7] For the restoration of *Διί* cf. Us. 602: Aelian *VH* 4. 13; Clem. *Strom.* 2. 178; Cic. *Fin.* 2. 88; Sen. *Ep.* 25. 4; Democritus fr. 246.

him in a closed room, where he remains, lacking the strength to move (236–8). Dawn made a terrible error. 'She did not think to ask for eternal youth and to banish the ruin of old age' (223–4 *οὐδ' ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσὶ πότνια Ἠὼς | ἤβην αἰτῆσαι ξύσαί τ' ἀπὸ γῆρας ὀλοιόν*). So while she, a true immortal, was not only deathless but free from the ravages of ageing and the passage of time, in some way Tithonus' ersatz divinity was incomplete. Time still bore down on him as it does on all mortals.[8]

One of the major problems facing those who wish to concern themselves with the ontological status and form of the Epicurean gods is this: if they are some kind of atomic compound, a 'living thing' out beyond the visible reaches of the *κόσμος*,[9] then we must ask why they are not subject to the processes of change and decay, erosion and change, which affect every other contingently arranged group of atoms in the Epicurean universe. What is so special about the gods that allows them to escape this decay?[10] For an Epicurean

[8] For a discussion of the various forms of immortality canvassed during the hymn see P. Smith, *Nursling of Mortality: A Study of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (Frankfurt, 1981). Cf. the immortality of Elina Makropulos as discussed by B. Williams, 'The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality', in his *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge, 1973), 82–100, and the response of J. M. Fischer, 'Why Immortality is Not So Bad', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2 (1994), 257–70. J. Strauss-Clay, 'Immortal and Ageless Forever', *Classical Journal*, 77 (1981–2), 112–17, discusses the mechanism by which an Olympian god is described as *ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως* (Hom. *Il.* 12. 323, 17. 444; *Od.* 5. 136 and 218; 7. 257, 23. 336; Hes. *Theog.* 955; Pind. *Nem.* 1. 67 ff.). Tithonus is one of the examples which show that immortality and agelessness are separable phenomena. See also O'Brien, 'Becoming Immortal', 200–1. Philodemus refers to Tithonus at *De morte* XIX. 33–5 Kuiper: *ὁ δ' ἄ[φρ]ων οὔτ' ἀξιόλ[ογον] ἐπιλή|ψετ' ἀγαθόν, ἂν καὶ [τ]ὸν T[ι]θωνοῦ δ[ια]|γένητ[αι] χρόνον*. I note also that Vogliano restored *τὸ[ν τοῦ Τιθωνοῦ] βίον* to Philod. *De morte* XIII. 1, instead of Kuiper's *τὸ[ν τῶν ἀφρόνων] | βίο[ν]*. My introduction of Tithonus here and for this particular comparison should not be thought to rest on any Epicurean use of the myth for a similar point.

[9] Or, if one must, 'in the *intermundia*': but see D. Obbink, 'The Atheism of Epicurus', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 30 (1989), 187–223 at 198 n. 34, who sounds a cautionary note. Despite the mention by Cicero in the preface to *ND* (1. 18), there is no clear reference to the gods' living in the *intermundia* in any Epicurean text, and it only appears at all in later doxography. Cf. P. Woodward, 'Star Gods in Philodemus PHerc. 152/157' ['Star Gods in Philodemus'], *C.Erc.* 19 (1989), 29–47 at 36, on *μετά[κόσ]μιον* meaning 'beyond *our* cosmos'.

[10] Lucr. 3. 806–18; cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 54 *ἀναγκαῖον τὰ μὴ μετατιθέμενα ἄφθαρτα εἶναι*; Metrodorus ap. Philod. *De pietate* 95–105 Obbink. This worry was voiced by Cicero through the spokesman Cotta: *ND* 1. 68, 114. It has generated two strands in the scholarly literature on this topic (see above, n. 1). One wishes to circumvent the problem by insisting that the gods are not atomic compounds at all, or at least not in the sense in which solid objects are. Instead, they are human extrapolations from thoughts and images of happy or long-lived humans. (Meta)physically these gods are

god even to exhibit the remarkable endurance of Tithonus would appear irreconcilable with the physical system he inhabits. Extreme ingenuity has been brought to bear on this question, but the Epicurean sources which probably contained the discussions of divine indestructibility are lacunose or obscure.[11] But Tithonus' story can be instructive in other ways. He suffers from what I should like to call 'pleonectic immortality'. He lives on and on and on, gathering 'lifetime'. It is as if, in Epicurean terms, Tithonus' atoms are glued together by Zeus' gift to withstand the usual erosive effects of being a compound in an atomist universe.

For Epicurean gods to be like this would be strange indeed, especially since it is clearly stated in some of our sources that they have always been. They never came into being. (I pursue this issue in Section III below). For Epicurus to claim that we humans can achieve a similar immortality would be even more peculiar: if one thing is clear, it is that we humans will dissolve and die. Our end is to be annihilated. 'Ipse Epicurus obit decurso lumine vitae' (Lucr. 3. 1042) and, remember, 'deus ille fuit'. So the message of the clos-

composed of streams of images (*eidōla*). This 'idealist' approach was initiated by W. Scott, 'The Physical Constitution of the Epicurean Gods', *Journal of Philology*, 12 (1883), 212–47, and exponents in that vein include Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, i. 144–9, Woodward, 'Star Gods in Philodemus', and D. Obbink, 'The Atheism of Epicurus' and *Philodemus on Piety* (Oxford, 1996), where he offers readings of *De pietate* coll. XII and XIII which provide strong support (esp. lines 350–60; cf. Aetius *Plac.* 1. 7. 34, 306–7 *DG* τέσσαρας φύσεις κατὰ γένος ἀφθάρτους τάσδε, τὰ ἄτομα, τὸ κενόν, τὸ ἄπειρον, τὰς ὁμοιότητας. Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, i. 145–6, suggest that the gods are 'indestructible' in two senses: (1) 'as concepts' because there is an inexhaustible supply of material for the *eidōla* (Lucr. 5. 1175–6), and (2) because they are imagined as indestructible beings. This view is attacked by J. Mansfeld, 'Aspects of Epicurean Theology', *Mnemosyne*, 46 (1993), 172–210, with a useful bibliography for this strand of interpretation (172 n. 1). The other manner of circumventing the problem of the *physical* indestructibility of the gods while holding a 'realist' view of their form is best shown by the ingenuity of K. Kleve, 'Die Unvergänglichkeit der Götter im Epikureismus', *Symbolae Osloenses*, 39 (1960), 116–26, who suggests that the gods live in the *intermundia*, so the effects of erosion are lessened by the scarcity of atoms, and are themselves made of very fine and mobile particles able to move out of the way (here he invokes the *clinamen*). Cf. D. Lemke, *Die Theologie Epikurs: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Munich, 1973), 37–8.

[11] e.g. Philod. *De dis* 3 fr. 81: G. Arrighetti, 'Filodemo *Περὶ Θεῶν* III fr. 74–82 (Pap. Herc. 157)', *Parola del passato* [*PP*], 10 (1955), 322–56 at 341 ff.; H. Diels, *Philodemus über der Götter, III. Buch* (Berlin, 1916), 62–3, suggests that the horribly lacunose Philod. *De dis* 3 fr. 19 may have dealt with the basis of divine ἀφθαρσία, as may col. XI: cf. G. Arrighetti, 'Filodemo *de dis* III, col. X–XI', *Studi classici e orientali*, 7 (1959), 83–99.

ing remarks of the *Letter to Menoeceus* is not that the Epicurean sage will evade death. Tithonan immortality is way off the mark.

But what is wrong with Tithonus' pleonectic immortality is very instructive indeed. Tithonus' terrible end resulted from his deathlessness not being accompanied by timelessness. The Epicurean sage's immortality must be, therefore, quite unlike that of Tithonus. It does not depend on the prolongation of life, nor the removal of death. Indeed, a correct conception of one's own mortality, an acceptance of that inevitability, must constitute an important part of the Epicurean sage's happiness. A paradox threatens: to attain Epicurean immortality, one must be happily mortal. But there is no paradox here, provided we remember that Tithonus' immortality is only one possible species of *ἀθανασία*.

II

> You know, it's really very peculiar. To be mortal is the most basic human experience and yet man has never been able to accept it, grasp it, and behave accordingly. Man doesn't know how to be mortal.
>
> (Milan Kundera, *Immortality*)

It is, of course, not accidental that I have moved the discussion to include the Epicureans' arguments against the fear of death. Not only is death the *φρικωδέστατον κακῶν* (D.L. 10. 125) which might stand in the way of our arrival at the goal of *ἀταραξία*, but there is clearly a connection to be made between the removal of one's fear of death and the approximation to divine immortality held out as the goal of life. In Platonism, this link is familiar and clear. I should not fear death, since death is merely the separation, indeed the liberation, of the soul from the body. This immortal soul, if freed from the constraints of the *σῆμα σῶμα*, is able to view clearly the eternal truths of the Forms.[12] The link to be fashioned in Epicureanism is less obvious, but is nevertheless crucial if we are to understand the godlike tranquillity which Epicurus offers.

If we remember that for an Epicurean the only criterion of value is (perceived) pleasantness (*Ep. Men.* 124), then a longer period of enjoyment is no better (i.e. more pleasant) in any way than a shorter

[12] See e.g. ps.-Plato *Axiochus* 365 E 2 ff.

period enjoying the same degree of pleasure.[13] Correctly conceived, katastematic pleasure, the absence of pain, cannot be increased by simple prolongation. True katastematic pleasure is a state of satiety—εὐσυμπλήρωτον (*Ep. Men.* 133)[14]—and something 'full' is no more 'full' if it remains 'full' for any longer duration, even if it were to remain full for ever.[15] It occurs the instant that all mental pain/fear is removed (*Ep. Men.* 128 ἅπαξ), and any subsequent 'variation' of the pleasurable state will not amplify or increase its pleasantness.[16] The incorrect valuation of pleasure, which prefers a longer duration or a larger number of pleasurable instances, would indeed lead one to think, for example, that Tithonus might have been not so wrong after all. He has no time limit on his life, and can pack in as many and as varied pleasures as he wishes (so long as he is physically capable of doing pleasurable things . . .). Epicurus has many criticisms of this view, which should not all be rehearsed here.[17] One of the most pertinent consequences of Epicurus' stance

[13] Of course, a longer period of pleasure is preferable to a shorter period of pleasure which is then replaced by a period of pain, but the pleasantness of the two periods of pleasure is equal.

[14] Cf. Philod. *De dis* 1 (*P.Herc.* 26) II. 9 ff.

[15] Aristotle makes a similar remark about the *F*-ness of eternally *F* Platonic Forms and of particular *F*s: *NE* $1096^{b}3$. Cf. Williams, 'The Makropulos Case', 89.

[16] *KΔ* 3, 18, 19; Cic. *Fin.* 1. 38 'omnis autem privatione doloris putat Epicurus terminari summam voluptatem, ut postea variari voluptas distinguique possit, augeri amplificarique non possit'; 2. 10 'ais cum dolore careamus tum in summa voluptate nos esse, cum autem vescamur iis rebus quae dulcem motum adferant sensibus tum esse in motu voluptatem quae faciat varietatem voluptatum sed non augeri illam non dolendi voluptatem'; cf. 417–19 Us.; Arist. *NE* $1174^{b}5$ ff. Cf. J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford, 1993), 337.

[17] One of the criticisms is that this view of pleasure as episodic and cumulative leads one to acquisitiveness and the constant search for 'new' pleasures. One never, consequently, stops to recognize and enjoy the true pleasures of satiety. Lucretius dramatizes this attitude with the allegory of the Danaids: 3. 1003 ff. See also *Gnom. Vat.* 14, especially if one reads χαῖρον with the Vatican codex rather than Stobaeus' καιρόν. The reading χαῖρον is supported by the version of *Gnom. Vat.* 14 in *P.Berol.* inv. 21312 fr. a (cf. O. Bouquiaux-Simon, 'Additamenta pour une anthologie mutilée (P.Berol. inv. 21312+P.Schubart 27)', in *Proceedings of XIX International Congress of Papyrology* (Cairo, 1992), i. 461–80, and O. Bouquiaux-Simon and C. Rutten's edition of *P.Berol.* inv. 21312+*P.Schubart* 27 fr. a, 2–6, in *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini* [*CPF*] 1. 1** (Florence, 1992), 158–61), and also by the version of *Gnom. Vat.* 14 found on the mosaic floor of a villa at Autun (A. Blanchard, 'Épicure, "Sentence Vaticane" 14: Épicure ou Métrodore?', *Revue des études grecques*, 104 (1991), 394–409—who has a good discussion of the textual tradition—and M. Blanchard-Lemée and A. Blanchard, 'Épicure dans une anthologie sur mosaïque à Autun', *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* for 1993, 969–84. M. Gigante, 'Quel che Aristippo non aveva detto', *PP* 48 (1993), 267–80 at 274–5, wishes to retain καιρόν, and emend μήκετι to μή γέ τι, making αἰῶνα the subject of εἶναι. All this is at least partly due to his desire to read Hor. *Odes* 1. 11 (*carpe*

on the nature of pleasure is that it can be marshalled successfully in support of his claim that 'death is nothing to us'.

If a longer period of pleasure is no more valuable than a shorter period, then prolongation of life is not of itself valuable: *οὐ τὸν μήκιστον ἀλλὰ τὸν ἥδιστον [χρόνον] καρπίζεται* (*Ep. Men.* 126).[18] This assertion is expanded somewhat in *KΔ* 19–21, which give a crucial basis to our understanding of Epicurus' thanatology.[19]

KΔ 20 (part) *ἡ δὲ διάνοια τοῦ τῆς σαρκὸς τέλους καὶ πέρατος λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐπιλογισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα τὸν παντελῆ βίον παρεσκεύασε, καὶ οὐθὲν ἔτι τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνου προσεδεήθη.*

But the intellect, making a calculation of the end and limit of the flesh, and banishing the fears of eternity, fashioned a complete life, and no longer required infinite time.

A 'complete' life (*παντελῆ*) is not to be measured by duration but by the level of happiness achieved.[20] Philodemus, *De morte* XII. 30–XIII, after quoting the example of Pythocles, who prodigiously attained happiness at the age of eighteen, speaks of:

diem) as an interpretation of *Gnom. Vat.* 14, in a further bid to insist that the ode is not Cyrenaic in inspiration). On either reading, Epicurus claims that many lives are destroyed both by constant striving for new pleasures, and also by *μελλησμός*, which appears to mean something like 'procrastination'. Philod. *De morte* XII. 11–15 has a similar thought.

[18] M. Gigante, *Ricerche filodemee*, 2nd edn. (Naples, 1983), 131 ff., notes that the badly mutilated Philod. *De morte* col. III might also contain arguments related to *KΔ* 19–21.

[19] This is not, *pace* D. J. Furley, 'Nothing to Us?', in M. Schofield and G. Striker (eds.), *The Norms of Nature* (Cambridge, 1986), 75–91 at 81, 'just dogma, without argumentation'. On *KΔ* 19, Epicurean hedonism, and thanatology, see S. Rosenbaum, 'Epicurus on Pleasure and the Complete Life' ['Epicurus on Pleasure'], *The Monist*, 73 (1990), 21–41.

[20] Cicero finds this as unconvincing as most modern commentators (*Fin.* 2. 87 ff., based on *KΔ* 19 and similar to my interpretation of that doctrine, refers to *Gnom. Vat.* 33 at 2. 88). Such a theory, Cicero claims, would work if one considered 'happiness' to be constituted by virtue, which is an *ἐνέργεια*, but pleasure simply does not function like that (*contra* Arist. *NE* 1153^{a}14. Comparing Aristotle and Epicurus: P. Merlan, *Studies in Epicurus and Aristotle* (Klassisch-philologische Studien, 2; Wiesbaden, 1960), and J. M. Rist, 'Pleasure: 360–300 BC', *Phoenix*, 28 (1974), 167–79). However, Cicero is thinking mainly of *kinetic*, not katastematic, pleasure, which Epicurus *would* allow to be a process and therefore to have duration. Once this misunderstanding is removed, Epicurus' theory appears much more coherent, even if it does not fit our intuitions about a 'complete' life. Generally on Cicero's exposition here and in *Tusc.* 3, see M. C. Stokes, 'Cicero on Epicurean Pleasures', in J. G. F. Powell (ed.), *Cicero the Philosopher* (Oxford, 1995), 145–70.

ἔ[ξὸν δὲ] | ἐμ ποσῷ[21] χρόνῳ τὸ μέγιστον αὐ[τῶν] | καὶ περιποιήσασθαι κα[ὶ] ἀπολαῦσαι κ[α]θά | περ ὑπέδειξ[α] . . . XIII. 3–6 Kuiper[22]

It being possible both to achieve and enjoy the greatest [goods] in some certain [sc. finite] period of time, as I have demonstrated . . .

The mistaken thought that one's pleasure can be increased simply by the accumulation and prolongation of goods is what drives men to ambition and acquisitiveness, both supreme causes of *ταραχή*. That same mistaken thought is what causes a fear of death as the inevitable loss of time I would have had to live had I not died when I did. If death 'cuts short' my enjoyment of life, then mortality is to be regretted. However, an Epicurean takes a much different view. Since once I have attained *ataraxia* nothing 'better' (i.e. more pleasant) will be achieved however much longer I live, there is no reason to fear death. Death cannot rob me of any further goods.[23] That is to say, an Epicurean will see nothing desirable in Tithonus' condition even before he became too weak to act. Moreover, he will see no difference between the pleasure of Zeus, who will not die, and of himself, who will die but whose death is 'nothing to him'.

Here we return to *Gnom. Vat.* 33: a human's *ataraxia* is no less than that of Zeus. *ταῦτα γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἕξειν κἂν ⟨Διὶ⟩ ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαιτο.*[24] Here a mental state is being described which, given that the relative periods for which pleasure is enjoyed by mortals and immortals is irrelevant to the degree of pleasure enjoyed, allows the direct comparison of human and divine attainment of *ataraxia*.[25] If mortality is irrelevant to my well-being

[21] *ἐμποσῷ* Kuiper.

[22] Cf. Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1124 c, and D. N. Sedley, 'The Structure of Epicurus' *On Nature*', *C.Erc.* 4 (1974), 89–92 at 90 n. 19; and 'Epicurus and the Mathematicians of Cyzicus', *C.Erc.* 6 (1976), 23–54 at 43–4; cf. *Gnom. Vat.* 17: being young is not good *per se*, nor is being old: Metrodorus fr. 52 Körte (Stob. 4. 50b. 77), *P.Berol.* inv. 16369 Dorandi in *CPF* 1. 1** 477–8. Note the examples of (1) Pythocles at Philod. *De morte* XII. 30 ff., and the ensuing discussion of premature death and a complete life (esp. XIII. 36–XIV. 7), and (2) Philista in Carneiscus' *Philista* bk. 2 (*P.Herc.* 1027 XVII, M. Capasso, *Carneisco: Il secondo libro del* Filista (*PHerc. 1027*) (Naples, 1988), 72 ff.). On *παντελῆ*: see C. Diano, *Epicuri Ethica et Epistulae* (Florence, 1974), 122–3.

[23] Philod. *De morte* XII. 2 ff., esp. XIII. 36–XIV. 10. Rosenbaum, 'Epicurus on Pleasure', *contra* T. Nagel, 'Death', in his *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, 1979), 1–10. It is not a conclusive objection that this cumulative conception of pleasure 'feels' right: D. J. Scott, 'Epicurean Illusions', *Classical Quarterly*, 39 (1989), 360–74.

[24] Cf. D.L. 10. 121.

[25] Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 2. 88; *KΔ* 1; *Ep. Men.* 135. Whether Epicurean theology is realist or idealist does not affect my argument: in either case the gods function as ideals of *ataraxia* (*Ep. Men.* 123). The importance of a correct theology for dispelling fears of

(conceived in Epicurus' hedonistic terms), then a mortal who has attained *ataraxia* is indeed as *εὐδαίμων* as a god. And, if for Epicurus the essential characteristic of a god is its paradigmatic *εὐδαιμονία*, then a mortal who is as happy as a god might indeed also be termed as divine as that god.[26] Of course, there is one distinction to be made: the mental state of the human described in *Gnom. Vat.* 33 also looks towards the future. One must have and expect to have a sufficiency of what is required for *ataraxia*. This points towards the one essential distinction between humans and gods, which I shall discuss in Section III below.

Remember *KΔ* 20: a correct conception of the nature of pleasure also banishes the fears produced by worrying about *ὁ αἰών*.[27] This is presumably what is meant by a *παντελῆ βίον* (*KΔ* 21), and by the assertion *τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι μελέτην τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν καὶ τοῦ καλῶς ἀποθνήσκειν* (*Ep. Men.* 126): attaining *ataraxia* entails having the correct attitude to the duration of your life, and therefore to your mortality.

In the second of the sections of Porphyry's *De abstinentia* 1 which relate various Epicurean doctrines (1. 49–55), a close link is made not only between the recognition of limits to desires and freedom from the fear of death and the attainment of happiness,[28] but also between this same recognition and *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ*. At *Abst.* 1. 54, first a link is described between *pleonexia* and the fear of death (54. 2–3). Then:

> *δεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀπεθίζειν ὡς οἷόν τε τῆς τοῦ κόρου ἡδονῆς, οὐ τῆς κατὰ τὴν πεῖναν πλησμοσυνῆς καὶ γεύεσθαι, ἵνα* ⟨*brief lacuna*⟩ *διὰ πάντων διέλθῃ, καὶ ὅρον θεῖναι τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, μὴ τὸ ἀόριστον. οὕτω γὰρ τούτῳ εἰληφέναι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἀγαθὸν ἐνέσται διὰ τῆς αὐταρκείας καὶ ὁμοιώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ· οὕτως οὐδ' αὐτὸ ἐπὶ πλέον ποθήσει οὐδὲ τὸν χρόνον ὡς προσθήσοντα αὐτῷ μεῖζον ἀγαθόν.* (Porph. *Abst.* 1. 54. 25 ff.)[29]

death is clear: Lucr. 3. 37 ff.; Philod. *De dis* 16. 18 ff., 18. 14 ff. (in Gigante, *Ricerche filodemee*, 2nd edn., 136–7).

[26] A. Barigazzi, 'Uomini e dei in Epicuro', *Acme*, 8 (1955), 37–56 at 41: 'Gli dei hanno come attributi essenziali l'immortalità e la beatitudine. Il primo vantaggio rispetto all'uomo è annullato dal fatto che la felicità è independente del tempo, perché il piacere e già perfetto nell'instante (*KΔ* 19, 10) cossiché diventa stolto il desiderio di tempo infinito.'

[27] Cf. Philod. *De morte* XXXVIII. 14–19.

[28] A link explored by W. Schmid, '*Lucretius ethicus*', in O. Gigon (ed.), *Lucrèce*, (Entretiens Hardt, 24; Geneva, 1977), 123–57 at 137 ff.

[29] Bouffartigue in his 1979 Budé edition at 23 rightly sees this as compatible with Epicureanism, although he states that 'L'expression *ὁμοίωσις τοῦ θεοῦ* est platonici-

It is also necessary to dishabituate the body as far as possible from the pleasure of surfeit, not that [pleasure] which comes from the fulfilment of hunger, and it is necessary to taste . . . in order to pass through all [sc. troubles], and place as a limit what is necessary, not what is unlimited. For thus will it be possible for this [man] to grasp the good which is available, through self-sufficiency and becoming like god. Thus he will feel no desire for more [of it], not even for more time to grant him even greater good.

Once it has been realized that the addition of more goods, or more time in which to acquire more goods, is irrelevant to happiness, which is instead understood as a state of satiety, then desire for more goods, and more time in which to accumulate goods, disappears. Temporal duration becomes irrelevant to my assessment of my life and its goodness, much as it is also irrelevant for the truly (i.e. non-Tithonan) immortal. One also becomes *αὐτάρκης* and in that respect too approximates to the gods: they too are self-sufficient. They *need* nothing, have no unfulfilled desires.

A striking passage from Philodemus' *De morte* illustrates these considerations by picturing an Epicurean sage who has achieved the correct opinions and therefore views his life and mortality correctly:

ὁ δὲ νοῦν ἔχων ἀπει|ληφὼς ὅ[τι] δύναται πᾶν περιποιῆσαι | [τ]ὸ πρὸς εὐδαίμονα βίον αὔταρκες, εὖ|θὺς ἤδη τὸ λοιπὸ[ν] ἐντεταφιασμέ|νος περιπατεῖ κα[ὶ] τὴν μίαν ἡμέραν | ὡς αἰῶνα κερδα[ί]νει. (Philod. *De morte* XXXVIII. 14–19 Kuiper)

The one who understands, having grasped that he is capable of achieving everything sufficient for the good life, immediately and for the rest of his life walks about already buried, and enjoys the single day as if it were eternity.

The wise man is always ready for death. He walks about 'already buried' because once he has achieved *eudaimonia*, to die at any point would be no better or worse than dying at another.[30] His attitude

enne dans ses origines et dans son emploi'. At 103 he notes that the antecedent for *τούτῳ* in this passage was probably lost in the lacuna.

[30] Cf. W. Schmid, 'Ein Tag und der Aion', in *Wort und Text für Fritz Schalk* (Frankfurt, 1963), 14–23, who at 19–20 refers to the 'Zeitenthobenheit des Weisen'; Gigante, *Ricerche filodemee*, 2nd edn., 173: 'Il saggio camina per le vie della vita, vestito dell'abito di morte: la morte è la sua consueta compagna del suo *περίπατος*, perché egli ha saputo e sa conquistarsi quanto basta all'*εὐδαίμων βίος*. Ogni giorno è una conquista, è tutta la vita, è l'eternità, l'unica autentica eternità; ogni giorno in piú è una felicità insperata e il suo morire è felice e gradito, ed egli s'accompagna alla morte degli altri, in una successione ineluttabile e perenne.' While I agree that in this section of the work Philodemus has much to say about the fragility of human life, I find his characterization of the wise man perhaps to be more positive. His passage

towards time and duration is also significantly different from that of those who do not view their mortality correctly. The single day becomes for him eternity, not in the sense that he lives life 'slowly', but, presumably, because he has recognized that a single day offers him the chance of absolute fulfilment.[31] But this does not mean that Epicurus advocates suicide as soon as one has achieved *ataraxia*. An Epicurean sage will wish to live as long as possible, and will take care of his health and avoid unnecessary dangers.[32] An Epicurean, while recognizing that 'death is nothing to him' and realizing that a longer life is not a more pleasant life, has no sufficient reason to take his own life, but will live 'donec retinebit blanda voluptas' (Lucr. 5. 178).[33] Indeed, the only occasions on which the Epicureans would allow suicide are those in which one's abilities or circumstances are such that it becomes impossible to guarantee one's *ataraxia*.[34]

It is important to note that *ἀθανασία* and its cognates are rarely

through life is not a struggle, nor is he happy each new day 'simply to be alive'. Compare L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 6. 4311: 'If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present'; D. Cockburn, *Other Times: Philosophical Perspectives on Past, Present, and Future* (Cambridge, 1997), 201: 'consider someone who is gripped by horror at the thought of his own death in ten or twenty years' time. Whether we say of him that he is living in the future—living as if he is going to die tomorrow—will depend on what we take to be an appropriate response to the fact that one will die in ten or twenty years' time.' Remember *KΔ* 20: *ἡ δὲ διάνοια . . . τοὺς τῆς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα . . .* On fear of 'the infinite' see C. Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety* (Princeton, 1990), 74–93.

[31] M. Jufresa, 'Il tempo e il sapiente epicureo', in Gigante and Giannantoni, *Epicureismo greco e romano*, 287–98, at 290: 'La pratica della filosofia epicurea si instaura in un "presente continuo" fatto di singoli instanti di pienezza, che hanno in se stessi il massimo valore.' Cf. R. Amerio, 'L'epicureismo e la morte', *Filosofia*, 3 (1952), 541–76 at 571–2; Salem, *Tel un dieu*, 55–6. On the meaning of *αἰών* in earlier literature and philosophy see E. Degani, *Αἰών da Omero ad Aristotele* (Padua, 1961).

[32] Philod. *On Choices and Avoidances* (*P.Herc.* 1251) XXIII Indelli and Tsouna.

[33] Cf. Lucr. 3. 1091–4: just as nothing is gained by living longer, so nothing is gained by dying sooner.

[34] Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 1. 49, and contrast the example of Diodorus, censured by the Epicureans (Sen. *De vita beata* 1. 19. 1), with Bassus Aufidius, praised for maintaining his *ataraxia* under ever increasing difficulties (Sen. *Ep.* 30). Democritus' decision to commit suicide is praised by Lucretius because in this account the early atomist recognized that old age was impairing his mental abilities (specifically his memory, and therefore his ability to recall pleasant experiences): Lucr. 3. 1039–41. On the Epicurean attitude to suicide see J. Cooper, 'Greek Philosophers on Euthanasia and Suicide', in B. A. Brody (ed.), *Suicide and Euthanasia* (Dordrecht, 1989), 9–38 (repr. in J. Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays in Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, 1999), 515–41), and W. Englert, 'Stoics and Epicureans on the Nature of Suicide', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1994), 67–98 at 86–95.

used by Epicurus, and are avoided when describing the gods. For that task he prefers to use the terms μακάριος and/or ἄφθαρτος.[35] However, one context in which 'immortality' appears will help to clarify the points just made, and explain (perhaps) this terminological preference.

ὅθεν γνῶσις ὀρθὴ τοῦ μηθὲν εἶναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὸν θάνατον ἀπολαυτὸν ποιεῖ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς θνητόν, οὐ προστιθεῖσα χρόνον, ἀλλὰ τὸν τῆς ἀθανασίας ἀφελομένη πόθον. (*Ep. Men.* 124)[36]

So true knowledge that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable not by adding on more (life)time, but by removing the desire for immortality.

The correct recognition of the irrelevance of death to us is said to make our lives more enjoyable. This does not add more years to our life. 'Death is nothing to us' not because we can become like Tithonus, but because we have recognized the irrelevance of duration for the assessment of the *quality* of our life, the amount of pleasure we might enjoy.[37] Note especially the last clause of the phrase above. Our lives are made *more* enjoyable by removing the desire for ἀθανασία. I take it that this must be related to the preceding thought about duration in the sense that here ἀθανασία connotes just that sort of *pleonectic* immortality from which Tithonus suffered. Nothing is to be gained by extending our lives. Indeed, to wish to extend our lives is to betray an incorrect and pernicious

[35] *KΔ* 1; *Ep. Men.* 123; *Ep. Hdt.* 81. By being ἄφθαρτοι Epicurean gods differ significantly from their Democritean predecessors. S.E. *M.* 9. 19 suggests that the *eidōla* which explain visions of divinity for Democritus are δύσφθαρτα μέν, οὐκ ἄφθαρτα δέ. Indeed, Velleius specifically contrasts Epicurean and Democritean theologies, claiming that the latter has no mechanism by which it can explain the permanence of atomic divinities: Cic. *ND* 1. 29 (cf. 1. 45 'beatos et inmortales'). Sadly, this has little to offer in explaining *how* Epicurean divinities are indestructible, and Democritean theology is no less obscure than its Epicurean descendant. Often later doxographical works appear to conflate the two. Cf. G. Vlastos, 'Ethics and Physics in Democritus', *Philosophical Review*, 54 (1945), 578–92, and 55 (1946), 53–64, at (1945) 580 n. 24, and D. McGibbon, 'The Religious Thought of Democritus', *Hermes*, 93 (1965), 385–97.

[36] Cf. *Ep. Men.* 135 ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς. Here the connotation might well be one of a constant supply, a persistent succession of goods.

[37] A. Barigazzi, 'Atomo e provvidenza divina', in *L'atomo fra scienza e letteratura*, (Università di Genova facoltà di lettere; Genoa, 1983), 55–73 at 55: 'la felicità è independente dal tempo e gli dei sono immortali piuttosto perché sono felici, non felici perché immortali'. Cf. J. Fallot, *Il piacere e la morte nella filosofia di Epicuro*, 2nd edn. (Florence, 1977), 33–6, 67–8.

view of pleasure.[38] Epicurus has branded the term *ἀθανασία* with connotations of *duration* which he would not wish to invoke in his *positive* message of Epicurean *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ*, and therefore avoids using it to describe his own gods.[39]

III

I have already alluded to a central problem in Epicurean theology (above, n. 10). It is essential to a number of Epicurean concerns (that death is nothing to us, that the cosmos had a beginning, and the like) that all atomic compounds are essentially corruptible. So how can the gods be called, as they regularly are, *μακάριοι καὶ ἄφθαρτοι*? Moreover, why does Epicurus feel comfortable applying both of these divine attributes to mortal Epicurean sages? This will be the concern of the next two sections.

Sextus Empiricus includes in his summary of the Epicurean discussion of how the 'ancients' came to conceive of the gods the thought that they took some particularly long-lived individual and extended his lifetime in both directions:

> [*οἱ παλαιοὶ*] *ἐπηύξησαν τὸν χρόνον εἰς ἄπειρον, προσσυνάψαντες τῷ ἐνεστῶτι καὶ τὸ παρῳχημένον καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα· εἶτα ἐντεῦθεν εἰς ἔννοιαν ἀϊδίου παραγενόμενοι ἔφασαν καὶ ἀΐδιον εἶναι τὸν θεόν.* (S.E. *M.* 9. 46)
>
> The ancients extended time infinitely, adding on to the present both the past and the future. So coming thus to the conception of eternity, they said that god is eternal.

It is important that the extension is in both directions. The human is not conceptually transmuted into an immortal simply by making him live longer, by preventing him from dying. That is what happened to Tithonus, and it falls short of the traditional conception of 'immortal and ageless' divinity.[40]

[38] Cf. Philod. *On Choices and Avoidances*, XVI Indelli and Tsouna: the uncertainty of when one is going to die leads some to wish to extend their lifetime indefinitely.

[39] H. Usener's *Glossarium Epicureum* s.v. *μακάριος* lists entries under *τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἀθάνατον*, including Cic. *ND* 1. 68 (later this note) and Greek citations which read *μακάριος καὶ ἄφθαρτος*. *ἀθάνατος* and *ἄφθαρτος* are not synonymous (cf. Plato *Phaedo* 106 C 9–107 A 1). Latin terminology is less clear. Cicero seems to translate *μακάριος καὶ ἄφθαρτος* as *beatus et aeternus* (*ND* 1. 45, 68), or *beatus et inmortalis* (1. 45), or *beatus et sempiternus* (1. 47, 105). Lucretius uses both *aeternus* (1. 242, 519, 539, 540, 612, 627; 5. 116, 1175) and *immortalis* ([1. 45], 1. 236, 545; 2. 647; 3. 612, 624, 715, 748, 775, 819, 869—of *mors*; 5. 53, 121).

[40] Cf. M. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton, 1994), 226–7 and n. 35.

Nevertheless, this should not necessarily lead us to conclude that divine durability or longevity, the mere fact that the gods are not subject to destruction, is itself a sufficient basis for their attaining such an ideal ethical state. Epicurus claims that a mortal, most surely subject to destruction, can certainly attain the happiness of a god, and therefore indestructibility is not a necessary condition for *eudaimonia*. If a mortal can come to attain the level of happiness of a god, this must be regardless of his mortal destructibility. Indestructibility *per se* might still be a sufficient condition for the gods' ἀταραξία, but if so then the exact correspondence of human and divine *eudaimonia* is lost. I am therefore inclined to think that the gods' *eudaimonia* is not directly linked to divine indestructibility.[41]

We should make sure that we take a similar view of the indestructibility of both god and mortal. The gods' immortality is importantly unlike that of Tithonus. They are not just extremely long-lived mortals. Rather, their 'lives' extend infinitely backwards and forwards in time so that to talk of them 'ageing' becomes impossible. In a way, their lifetimes have become extended so far, (infinitely far) that they cannot be 'dated'. There was no time before which they had not yet come to be, and there will be no time after which they are conceived to be no longer. Tithonus may carry on living for ever, but there was a time before he lived. He can be dated from that point, and in this way time might take hold and age him. The gods, on the other hand, have always been and will always be. To ask 'how old' they are is to misunderstand them. If so, then we should perhaps avoid thinking of them as 'persisting' through time like extremely stable atomic conglomerates. This cannot be the sort of indestructibility they possess.[42]

Still, in important ways, humans are not like the gods. They are

[41] Merlan, 'Zwei Fragen', 215, tries to offer an explanation: 'Man könnte die paradoxe Behauptung wagen, daß für den Epikureismus der Weise nicht nur ebenso glücklich ist wie Gott, sondern auch wie dieser unsterblich; ihre Unsterblichkeit unterscheidet sich nur durch die Zeitdauer.' But what kind of indestructibility does this leave us with, if it can vary in duration? (Cf. W. Schmid, 'Götter und Menschen in der Theologie Epikurs', *Rheinisches Museum*, 94 (1951), 97–156 at 140: 'Nur wo ἀφθαρσία in Bezug auf Lebensart *und* Lebendauer verstanden wird, ist ein Unterschied erkennbar'.) Paradoxical indeed. Moreover, this would ignore the work expended in divorcing the notion of degrees of pleasure from duration. The happiness of god and mortal turned out to be equal since the degree of happiness is unaffected by the duration of that state. The advantages a god has over a man are not relevant to the comparison of their states of pleasure *at an instant*.

[42] In which case, this offers support for the Scott/Long and Sedley view of the gods' composition (above, n. 10).

born and they die. They also require maintenance to sustain their growing and then decaying bodies. The vessel that is the Epicurean philosopher must be refilled (from whatever source) on a regular basis. Being mortal, Epicurus will grow hungry, ill, and old, and even though he is able to use recollection and anticipation techniques to mitigate this, they require some sort of concentration. Without that constant attention Epicurus will 'oscillate' between the state of *aponia* and the lack/hunger produced by simple natural processes.[43]

I suspect that this is the thought behind the expression of *Gnom. Vat.* 33 to which I referred above (p. 240): *σαρκὸς φωνὴ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ διψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥιγοῦν. ταῦτα γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἔξειν κἂν ⟨Διὶ⟩ ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαιτο.* A mortal can rival the supreme happiness of an Epicurean god if he both *has* and *expects to have in the future* sufficient goods to ensure his *aponia*. It is therefore *aponia*, rather than *ataraxia*, which is the component liable to cause the greatest distinction between humans and gods.[44] This is not a consequence of any failure of understanding on the part of the Epicurean sage. Once he has come to internalize the various doctrines which ensure mental tranquillity, he has no need to relearn them in the future on a regular basis.[45] The need for humans constantly to maintain their physical state is rather a consequence of the fact that a human's life is essentially affected by the passage of time. In this respect a mortal, even an Epicurean philosopher, cannot escape the failings of Tithonus. The phrasing of *Gnom. Vat.* 33 draws attention to the inescapable fact that, try as he might to limit his dependence on external goods, the Epicurean finds himself a human within human society, and subject to the contingencies of time: *ἐλπίζων ἔξειν*. His ability to insulate himself from external necessities is therefore limited.[46]

μνημονευτέον δὲ ὡς τὸ μέλλον οὔτε ἡμέτερον οὔτε πάντως οὐχ ἡμέτερον, ἵνα μήτε

[43] Cf. W. Luppe, 'Leiden und Krankheiten der Götter bei Philodem *de pietate* 1088, 1', *C.Erc.* 16 (1986), 67–9, for part of Philodemus' discussion of views of gods' and mortals' susceptibility to sickness.

[44] Compare the parallel Aristotelian distinction at *NE* 1154^{b}26 ff.

[45] Although Epicurean texts stress the need to recite and internalize the doctrines (*Ep. Men.* 135; cf. the gnomic, memorable form of the *KΔ*).

[46] For Epicurean attitudes to external goods see A. Barigazzi, 'Sul concetto epicureo della sicurezza esterna', in *Συζήτησις: Studi sull'epicureismo greco e romano offerti a M. Gigante* (Naples, 1983), i. 73–92.

πάντως προσμένωμεν ὡς ἐσόμενον μήτε ἀπελπίζωμεν ὡς πάντως οὐκ ἐσόμενον. (*Ep. Men.* 127)

We should bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor entirely not ours, so that we should neither entirely expect it to be nor should we despair that it will not be at all.

Regular *kinēseis* caused by the introduction of food will be necessary for Epicurus, but not for the eternal and static Epicurean gods. If so, Cicero makes an enlightening mistake in his version of *Gnom. Vat.* 33: 'dempta enim aeternitate nihilo beatior Iuppiter quam Epicurus' (*Fin.* 2. 88), as if only by disregarding Jupiter's immortality can Jupiter and Epicurus be considered equally happy.[47] But it is not by being immortal that Jupiter enjoys greater happiness than the mortal Epicurus, since at those instants when Epicurus is in a state of *aponia/ataraxia* he does indeed rival Jupiter. *Ataraxia* and *aponia* are not increased (in quality and therefore in value) by duration: if Epicurus is in that state for a year rather than a month, that does not improve the quality of that state, nor would being in that state eternally. Rather, since Epicurus is mortal, these periods are not permanent, but require constant maintenance through recollection/anticipation techniques and the regular intake of food. An isolated phrase in part of Diogenes' doxography immediately prior to the *Letter to Menoeceus* might point to this division:

τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν διχῇ νοεῖσθαι, τήν τε ἀκροτάτην οἵα ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν θεόν, ἐπίτασιν οὐκ ἔχουσαν· καὶ τὴν κατὰ τὴν προσθήκην καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν ἡδονῶν. (D.L. 10. 12)[48]

Happiness is conceived in two forms: the highest, for example that of god, which cannot be increased, and that which accords with the addition and removal of pleasures.

IV

We might be happy at this stage in thinking that the only divine quality men cannot have is indestructibility, *however* we reconcile divine indestructibility with atomist physics (cf. *Gnom. Vat.* 31). In

[47] Note the Loeb translation by Rackham: 'Take away his everlasting life and Jove is no happier than Epicurus.'

[48] Cf. W. Scott, *Fragmenta Herculanensia* (Oxford, 1885), 189–90. Arrighetti, 'Filodemo *Περὶ Θεῶν* III fr. 74–82', 340–1, has a good discussion of this and related passages, suggesting that *ἀταραξία* is identical for gods and humans, but that humans must maintain *ἀταραξία* through memory and anticipation. Cf. Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, ii. 121. Cf. Aetius 1. 7. 7, 361 Us.: God is ὅλον ὂν περὶ τὴν συνοχὴν τῆς ἰδίας εὐδαιμονίας τε καὶ ἀφθαρσίας.

Ep. Hdt. 76–7, 78, 81 (cf. *Ep. Men.* 123) μακαριότης μετ' ἀφθαρσίας is the property of the gods, while the former without the latter is regularly used for men (*Ep. Hdt.* 78, 79, 80).[49] There are, however, passages in which Epicurus himself appears to claim indestructibility for a human. Plutarch cites Epicurus addressing Colotes: ἄφθαρτός μοι περιπάτει καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀφθάρτους διανοοῦ (Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1117 C; cf. *Non posse* 1091 C), 'Go about for me, indestructible, and think me indestructible too'. Plutarch is in polemical mode throughout this work, and his picture of a young Colotes venerating Epicurus as a suppliant who clasps the knees of a god is supposed to be risible and absurd. But still that is not, of itself, sufficient for us to disregard his evidence on this point. If Epicureans were happy to call Epicurus a god, why not assign to him the characteristics he assigned to gods? There is no reason for Epicurus not to have done some such thing himself when characterizing the Epicurean sage. What, then, would Epicurus mean by claiming that he was indestructible? He cannot be making a point at the level of physics, that is sure. Epicurus and Colotes are mortal, and are under no delusions about that. Perhaps he claims that he and Colotes are 'blessed' and that their 'blessedness' is indestructible, i.e. for so long as they live they will be able to maintain, as far as possible for a mortal, the highest state of *eudaimonia*, the state which elevates them to the gods.

One further text will perhaps help. Diogenes of Oinoanda's Epicurean inscription includes a *Letter to Mother*, perhaps written by Epicurus, which touches on this theme:

ο]ὐ γὰρ μει|κρὰ οὐδέ[ν τ' ἀνύ]τοντα | περιγείνεται ἡ[μ]εῖν | τάδ' οἷα τὴν διάθεσιν | ἡμῶν ἰσόθεον ποιεῖ | καὶ οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν θνη|τότητα τῆς ἀφθάρτου | καὶ μακαρίας φύσεως | λειπομένους ἡμᾶς | δείκνυσιν. ὅτε μὲν | γὰρ ζῶμεν, ὁμοίως τοῖς θεοῖς χαίρομεν . . . (fr. 125. III. 9–IV. 10 Smith)

For not small or ineffectual are those gains of ours which make our disposition equal to the gods, and in no way do they show us to be inferior to indestructible and blessed nature, not even by virtue of our mortality. For when we live, we feel pleasure just like the gods . . .

The authorship of this letter is dubious, so it cannot be claimed without reservation as a piece of genuine theory written by Epicurus.[50] But there is no reason to doubt that it is expressing Epicurean

[49] Decleva Caizzi, 'The Porch and the Garden', 326.

[50] See P. Gordon, *Epicurus in Lycia: The Second-century World of Diogenes of Oenoanda* (Michigan, 1996) 66 ff.

orthodoxy. My interest is in the supposed inference from the proposition in the final line cited above. Since when we live we attain the pleasure of the gods, we are not made deficient by virtue of our mortality with regard to the imperishable and blessed nature of the gods. How do we read this? One possible version reads the text loosely:

(1) Since pleasure is such that when we live we can enjoy pleasure equal to the gods (*Gnom. Vat.* 33) . . .
(2) Therefore we are not deficient with regard to divinity as a result of our mortality.

Here, (2) reads IV. 4–8 (*οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν θνη|τότητα τῆς ἀφθάρτου | καὶ μακαρίας φύσεως | λειπομένους ἡμᾶς | δείκνυσιν*) holistically as the now familiar assertion that our mortality is not a cause of deficiency. Coming to terms with that mortality will elevate us to a godlike level. In this case *τῆς ἀφθάρτου | καὶ μακαρίας φύσεως* is simply synonymous with 'divinity' or 'god'; this text therefore offers little to advance our enquiry.

A second interpretation would insist on a distinction between the 'indestructibility' and the 'blessedness' of that phrase: coming to terms with our mortality not only reveals that it is not a cause of any shortfall in *eudaimonia*, but also shows that it is not the cause of any deficiency when it comes to *ἀφθαρσία*. Here, then, we would find the expression of an argument for mortal approximation to the 'indestructibility' characteristic of the gods, just as we have been able to find elsewhere for mortal approximation to the *eudaimonia* of the gods. By correctly modifying our conception of our own mortality, we come to be both as happy as god and also as indestructible as god.

How that parallel argument might work, however, remains obscure. It seems difficult to construct an argument along the same lines as that for pleasure: that 'indestructibility' is a characteristic which can be complete at an instant, and therefore not compromised by our inevitable eventual annihilation. 'Indestructibility' seems to be just the sort of characteristic which would be essentially compromised by mortality. At least, physical indestructibility is certainly like that. I think we have a choice here. We might see a slip from the 'indestructibility' of the gods which comprises both the conception of *permanence*, of physical continuity (in whatever physical form we decide the Epicurean gods take), and a permanent 'indestructible'

(i.e. inalienable) hold on *eudaimonia*, to a human 'indestructibility' which comprises only the latter. While we live we can maintain *eudaimonia*, and in that sense our *eudaimonia* is 'indestructible': it will never be the case that I will live and not be *eudaimōn*.[51] This appears, however, to offer Epicurus an argument which, if not inconceivable, is certainly not perspicuous and perhaps sophistic. If I enter an Epicurean Garden after being promised *ἀφθαρσία* and find that the kind of *ἀφθαρσία* being offered is one which crucially involves my accepting my inevitable annihilation, I might justly feel disappointed.

But again, that might be the very point of the claim. Such disappointment still betrays a pernicious and tenacious hold on incorrect conceptions of pleasure and the quality of life. The disappointed student would be referred back to *Ep. Men.* 124, and told to work harder. Before any student can begin to understand Epicurus' promise of *ἀφθαρσία*, he must already have progressed beyond the stage of being concerned about the duration of his life. He must already have internalized the opinion that his inevitable annihilation is 'nothing to him', that physical continuity *per se* is entirely irrelevant to the pleasantness of his life, and thus be ready to accept an alternative, revisionary view of the kind of *ἀφθαρσία* which Epicurus offers: the kind of *ἀφθαρσία* that *matters*. If someone can truly think that death is nothing to him and that he is mortal, and think that nevertheless, indeed because of that acceptance, he is in no way inferior to 'blessed and indestructible' gods, then he will have attained a remarkable, and perhaps enviable, state.[52]

[51] I am encouraged along this line by the recurrence of the verb *περιπατεῖ* at Philod. *De morte* XXXVIII. 14–19, where a similar point is being made. There, Philodemus emphasizes the self-sufficiency of the wise man. He *always* has *everything* required to maintain his *ἀταραξία*.

[52] In this case notice, however we eventually explicate human *ἀφθαρσία* this will not necessarily be immediately applicable to the vexed question of divine *ἀφθαρσία* in the sense of physical indestructibility. Presumably the gods will (also) possess *ἀφθαρσία* in the sense in which it is available to humans. Verity Harte suggested to me that it is perhaps unhelpful to think of the gods themselves as possessing physical indestructibility at all, especially given my concerns about talking of them persisting through time (see p. 245). Perhaps we might restrict their *ἀφθαρσία* to their being essentially and constantly in a state of *ataraxia*; this inalienable hold on happiness is common to gods and men. But still, the texts which do treat the question of the metaphysical composition of the gods seem to be offering some account of why they are not subject to the same physical erosion as other macroscopic compounds, and so I am still inclined to characterize the gods as physically indestructible in some way.

V

There is an important complementary strand to Epicurean thought which drives a human to look away from a mortal standpoint and take up a god's-eye view of the universe. This is to be achieved through Epicurean natural philosophy. Many of these thoughts are compressed into a single *sententia*:

μέμνησο ὅτι θνητὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει καὶ λαβὼν χρόνον ὡρισμένον ἀνέβης τοῖς περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ κατεῖδες "τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα". (*Gnom. Vat.* 10)

This is a curious *sententia*, but one which, if its balanced vocabulary and expression are pressed, can offer further revealing insights into the interrelationship between Epicurean wisdom, mortality, and immortality. It begins with what looks like a traditional *memento mori*. Indeed, it is extremely tempting to understand an 'although' in a translation of this thought, and think that this mortality is therefore a hindrance to these achievements: 'Remember that despite being mortal in nature, and despite being in receipt of a finite length of time, you have nevertheless ascended through your natural enquiries to infinity and eternity and have gazed down upon *what is, will be, and was before.*'[53] But the temptation should be resisted. The text does not require us to insert any concessives, and to do so would be an error, since it might suggest that mortality is or should be thought of as an obstacle to the rewards promised here, or that the achievement of those rewards is remarkable given the subject's mortality.

I would prefer to understand the phrase without any connotation of concession. The tone is entirely positive and *uplifting*, and this should be reflected in a translation. *θνητὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει* ('Being mortal'; no 'despite'), a human is able to attain the apotheosis of ascent to the infinite through *τοῖς περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς*. Again, *λαβὼν χρόνον ὡρισμένον* ('taking a finite period of time'; no 'despite'), a mortal via these same enquiries is able to reach *ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ*

[53] This phrasing is Homeric (*Il.* 1. 70) and also related closely to the practice of prophecy. Its three parts are related to a tripod on which the Delphic priestess would sit to deliver oracles: *Suda* s.v.; Plut. *E apud Delphos* 387 B–C. This is perhaps also recalled in the title of Nausiphanes' work *The Tripod*, from which Epicurus is said to have derived his epistemology (D.L. 10. 14). For other Delphic themes in Epicureanism see Obbink, *Philodemus on Piety*, 568–9.

τὸν αἰῶνα. My mortality is φύσει, *and* (not 'but') it is by coming to understand φύσις that I ascend to the perspective of the (Homeric) godlike view of what is, was, and will be. These apparent paradoxes serve a pedagogical purpose: by attempting to resolve the contrasts we come to see how Epicureanism can liberate us by forcing us to accept mortality, by showing that it is 'nothing to us'. It is therefore no accident that there are close Lucretian parallels to this phrase.

Early in the first book, famously, Epicurus was the first (1. 66 'primum Graius homo') to attack contemporary superstition with φυσιολογία.

> ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
> processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
> atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
> unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
> quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
> quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
> quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
> obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.
>
> (1. 72–9)[54]

So the vibrant force of his intellect won through and he travelled beyond the flaming walls of the universe and ranged across the entire expanse in mind and thought. From there the conqueror brings back to us what can and cannot come to be, how there is a determined capacity and a deep-set boundary, of each and every thing. In its turn, then, *religio* lies trampled by his feet, and his victory lifts us up to heaven.

The knowledge which Epicurus attains is as universal as the awareness of 'what is, was, and will be' of *Gnom. Vat.* 10. Similarly, he metaphorically travels out beyond the cosmos to gaze down from his vantage-point of comprehensive understanding upon all of its workings. This comprehensivity is the claim of Epicurean natural philosophy, the sufficiency of atomist explanation to account for all *phainomena*. οἱ περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοί in *Gnom. Vat.* 10 allowed us to understand our own (mortal) nature together with the nature of the surrounding universe, and in doing so elevated us to this level of the divine mortal Epicurus, all-surveying. From a sufficiently detached point of view there is no change and all things

[54] Cf. Lucr. 5. 49 ff.; P. Hardie, *Virgil's* Aeneid*: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), 194–7. For parallel uses of such an image see R. M. Jones, 'Posidonius and the Flight of the Mind', *Classical Philology*, 21 (1926), 97–113.

can be comprehended. As Nature herself reminds us in the *De rerum natura*, 'eadem sunt omnia semper' (3. 945). This is how Epicurean natural philosophy is all-explanatory, and a consequence of its all-explanatory power is this removal of the philosopher's viewpoint beyond and outside his own lifetime of motion, change, and decay. This is an extension of the thought that duration is irrelevant to the assessment of the pleasantness of one's life. From a sufficiently detached perspective all temporal distinctions become irrelevant.[55]

Epicurean φυσιολογία removes the necessity for explanations involving interventionist deities. It removes the thought that we might in some sense survive death, and depart to a place of punishment or reward. It tramples upon *religio* and like the hubristic Giants assaulting Olympus it usurps the gods' knowledge of what is, was, and will be. By reclaiming and understanding mortality and the wider φύσις of the universe, by getting one's priorities right, by understanding the true nature of pleasure, one approximates to the ideal happiness of the gods: 'nos exaequat victoria caelo'. We are elevated beyond mortal conceptions of the world, of life, growth, and death to a god's-eye view of τὸ πᾶν.

Phillip De Lacy claimed that this promise of a move to tranquillity generated by a detachment from the immediate goings-on of the world around one creates a difficult dilemma within Epicurean thought. In promoting such a 'removal' to the god's-eye view of

[55] Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, pursues this theme with reference to the point of view of the Epicurean gods. Commenting on Lucr. 5. 168–72, she notes at 216: 'For we are told that those who are completely self-sufficient have no desire for any change at all; so in their world there will probably be no sense of temporal extension at all, and surely no sense of temporal development with respect to value . . . the grasp of the whole takes the knower permanently and decisively beyond the mortal constitution, into the value system, therefore the security, of the god.' She continues her discussion of the consequences of this thesis on pp. 226 ff., claiming that a truly self-sufficient godlike state is incompatible with a number of what appear to be inalienable human concerns (e.g. love, friendship, the virtues). This might make the divine state less appealing since gods are (229) 'dead . . . to the beauty that delights us [sc. as humans]', but she concedes that this is to judge the godlike state from an empirical human sense of value. Similar considerations led her to view the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ passages from Arist. *NE* 10 (*The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge, 1986), 373–7) 'as serious working-out of elements of a [sc. Platonist] position to which Aristotle is in some ways deeply attracted, though he rejects it in the bulk of his mature ethical and political writing' (p. 377). Cf. M. Nussbaum, 'Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics', in J. E. J. Altham and R. Harrison (eds.), *World, Mind, and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams* (Cambridge, 1995), 86–131, and contrast with Sedley, 'Becoming Like God', 335–9.

τὸ πᾶν, De Lacy claims that Epicurus jeopardizes his simultaneous insistence on the necessity of 'immediate experience' of the world for the generation of value. I must immerse myself in the world to take pleasure in living, but I must detach myself from the world to maintain my objective, tranquil disposition. 'It is necessary that we view the world as process, if we are to achieve peace of mind; yet it is necessary that we enter into the world of immediate experience if we are to find any values at all. The former course tends to make life empty; the latter imperils its tranquillity.'[56] A similar tension between objective viewpoint and subjective participation can be detected in the curious Hippocratic *Pseudepigrapha* which deal with the meeting between Hippocrates and Democritus (probably composed after the lifetime of Epicurus, and therefore reflecting not only Democritean but also Epicurean philosophy).[57] This talk of an external viewpoint seems best to capture the picture of Democritus' particular insight in the *Letters*, and might best explain the most disturbing of his symptoms, his laughter at humanity: ἐγὼ δὲ ἕνα γελῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνοίης μὲν γέμοντα, κενεὸν δὲ πρηγμάτων ὀρθῶν (letter 17, ix. 360 Littré). Hippocrates' first reaction to the news of Democritus' behaviour is to wonder whether rather than a

[56] P. H. De Lacy, 'Process and Value: An Epicurean Dilemma', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 88 (1957), 114–26 at 118. This view is contrasted with that of Nussbaum (see above, n. 55) and both of these views then criticized by A. A. Long, 'Lucretius on Nature and the Epicurean Self' ['Lucretius on nature'], in K. A. Algra, M. H. Koenen, and P. H. Schrijvers (eds.), *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background* (Amsterdam, 1997), 125–39, who sees the resolution of De Lacy's dilemma as implicit in Lucretius' attention to and insistence on the law-like workings of the (non-teleological) *natura rerum*. An understanding of the workings of nature and man's place *within it* are essential for leading a happy Epicurean life. Long speculates that Lucretius' emphasis on this theme is a reflection of Stoic influence in the period between the death of Epicurus and the composition of the *De rerum natura* (at 131 ff.). I am not convinced that this is necessary, nor that we are entitled to make such contrasts between Lucretius and Epicurus given our limited access to the latter's writing. Long's judgement at 138 that Epicurus' 'optimism sometimes degenerated into pithy slogans, which are too superficial to register the difficulty of looking at one's life objectively even if tranquillity is the reward for doing so', seems to ignore the deliberately truncated and protreptic form of the *Letter to Menoeceus* or the *Kyriai Doxai*.

[57] The letters are generally thought to date from between the 1st cent. BCE and the first cent. CE (J. Pigeaud, *La Maladie de l'âme* (Paris, 1981), 452; W. D. Smith, *Hippocrates: Pseudepigraphic Writings* (Leiden, 1990), 29, refers to a 1st-cent.-CE papyrus from Egypt of letter 11. Based on internal evidence he suggests at 26 that the Democritus letters must have been written after the life of Hierophylus. He also suggests at 31 that letters 18–21 were added later than 10–17). There appear to be clear allusions to Epicureanism and Lucretius: Democritus in the letters stands for 'atomism' taken most generally.

sign of madness, the laughter is a sign of detachment, perhaps even *transcendence*. It is worth citing this text in full:

> It is not wholly madmen who want caves and quiet, but also those who scorn human affairs in their desire for freedom from perturbation [ἀταραξίης]. When the intellect wants to stop being battered by external tumult it takes the body quickly then to quiet. Then it stands upright in itself and looks round in a circle at the place of truth, where there is no father, no wife, no children, mother, siblings, relatives, menials, no Chance, in sum, none of the things that will make a tumult. All things that perturb [τὰ ταράσσοντα] stay shut out by fear; out of respect for those who live there they dare not approach. And those who live in that place are the sciences, virtues of all sorts, the gods and demigods, will and thought. In that place the great pole has made a wreath of his restless stars. And there, perhaps, Democritus, too, has been removed by learning [ὑπὸ σοφίης μετῴκισται]. (Letter 12, ix. 332 Littré, trans. W. D. Smith)

It is not too difficult to find Democritean statements which may have formed the basis of such an image. His famous declaration that anything beyond atoms and void is simply νόμῳ (B 9) would, if read with a clear ethical emphasis, point to the bare conventionality of all those values and opinions which drive human action.[58] The vanishingly small importance of human affairs against the backdrop of the infinity of atoms and void is also a contrast which might easily generate a view of humanity as 'absurd'. One explanation of this absurdity is that it is generated by the simultaneous consideration of human life both from within, accepting its worth and values, and from without, viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*.[59] The threat of absurdity looms because it seems impossible to choose to ignore one of these perspectives: once the realization of the infinity of an

[58] This seems to have been filtered through Cynic reception to form the Democritus of the *Letters*. See Z. Stewart, 'Democritus and the Cynics', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 63 (1958), 179–91. Compare the story of Democritus' blindness (and therefore inability to see all the various perceptual qualities which are merely νόμῳ): Cic. *Tusc.* 5. 114, A 22 DK) 'luminibus amissis alba scilicet discernere et atra non poterat: at vero bona mala, aequa iniqua, honesta turpia, utilia inutilia, magna parva poterat, et sine varietate colorum licebat vivere beate . . . et cum alii saepe quod ante pedes esset non viderent, ille in infinitatem omnem peregrinabatur, ut nulla in extremitate consisteret.' Democritus is unable to see but *for that reason* is able (metaphorically) to range unimpeded in thought through his atomic universe, leaving the sighted to stumble in his wake. *Peregrinabatur* = ps.-Hipp. μετῴκισται? Cicero may be using a Cynic source similar to that which underlies the pseudo-Hippocratic letters.

[59] T. Nagel, 'The Absurd', in his *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, 1979), 11–23 at 14–15.

atomist universe has dawned, say, or one has travelled with Epicurus beyond the *flammantia moenia mundi*, then this background to our particular *kosmos* and our particular lives cannot be ignored. Similarly, it is not clear how one would be able to live solely with an objective view of one's life. If the Democritean view of the futility of human life is pushed, then it becomes impossible to continue to live with this view: 'In continuing to live, and work, and strive, we take ourselves seriously in action no matter what we say.'[60] The best option, therefore, is to attempt to soldier on with both of these viewpoints, each mitigating the other.[61]

But if offered as an answer to De Lacy's dilemma, this maintenance of the two views might fail to appreciate fully the *revisionary* aspect of Epicurean ethics.[62] It seems quite possible that someone will not laugh constantly at his fellow humans once he has come to the Epicurean godlike view of the universe, nor will he cease to live a life, and take pleasure in living that life. That is not to say, however, that he will be living with an unchanged subjective view of his life and its pleasure, with a new objective view running concurrently. φυσιολογία does not leave intact all previous values. Indeed, in turn, its pursuit is motivated by a desire for an ethical goal (*KΔ* 11, 12). Rather, a new, single, Epicurean perspective on the world views a life as a human within the all-encompassing view promised in *Gnom. Vat.* 10. The agent will take pleasure in living a

[60] Ibid. 20.

[61] T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford, 1986), 221. Long, 'Lucretius on Nature', 139, suggests that we should read Lucretius with Nagel's book in mind.

[62] Cockburn, *Other Times*, 6, 20–1, stresses the revisionary nature of a view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, a view which he links with the 'tenseless' conception of time: the rejection of McTaggart's A-Series of 'past, present, future' in favour of the B-Series 'prior, simultaneous, later'. This view also tends to be accompanied by considerations which lessen the *per se* importance of the present. It is probably not coincidental that in the enormous literature devoted to the discussion of the Epicurean arguments against the fear of death, and especially the 'Symmetry Argument' of Lucr. 3. 832–45, the discussion often centres around the inevitability or otherwise of a 'future bias' in living a human life. I. Haji, 'Prevital and Post-vital Times', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 72 (1991), 171–80 at 178, suggests that the symmetry argument demands an atemporal view of value. A. L. Bruckner and J. M. Fischer, 'Death's Badness', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 74 (1993), 37–45 at 42, claim in response that the fact 'that we live our lives within time . . . provides some reason to think that the temporally situated perspective is at least as important as the atemporal . . . with respect to the generation or recognition of values.' D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford, 1984), 165 ff., explores this 'future bias' and declares it 'not irrational' (at 167). He acknowledges that to avoid the fear of death the bias must be avoided, but is pessimistic about the possibility of such a state (186, cf. 175). I suggest that we should interpret Epicurus as promoting just such a state.

life, in friends, and in various pursuits, and is always fully conscious that this finite and particular life takes place within a universe of infinite *kosmoi*, made of infinite atoms infinitely moving in an infinite void. Yet that cosmology does not devalue the life; pleasures are still pleasures and thus valuable *per se*. It is still possible to attain ἀταραξία, and thus come to rival the happiness of the gods in the manner described in my discussion of *Gnom. Vat.* 33. Indeed, an understanding of Epicurean cosmology is an essential part of attaining ἀταραξία; it is a necessary step in banishing fears of death and of divine retribution. Remember that in my interpretation of *Gnom. Vat.* 10 I insisted on resisting the temptation to insert concessives: 'although', 'but'. Such concessions would only lead back to the duality of perspective made into a dilemma by De Lacy. However we finally describe the outlook of the divine Epicurean wise man, it should be a single outlook.

It must be admitted that these remarks go little further than outlining the formal requirements on the single new perspective we must demand from Epicurus' theory. As yet they offer no real content, no substantive account of that perspective. We might still feel unclear about how it would feel to live in this way. The surviving evidence offers little straightforward help, so any attempt at such an account would need not only to use the evidence on the behaviour of the wise man retained in Diogenes Laertius and Philodemus' *De morte*, but also to interpret the picture of Epicurus' own attitude as revealed in the biographical tradition, especially the accounts of his final days and reaction to imminent death (e.g. D.L. 10. 15–22). Nevertheless, it should be agreed that such an account of such a perspective is not impossible in principle.

This is how we might outline one of the connections between Epicurean cosmology and ethics. There are other Lucretian poetic expressions of the relationship between φυσιολογία[63] and divinity which emphasize how this acquaintance with Epicurean natural philosophy serves both to provide a better knowledge of how the gods really are, and also through that knowledge to free mortals from their various anxieties about divinity and so provide ἀταραξία, the state in which we might approximate to those gods.

In the proem to the third book Lucretius returns to the theme of the all-explanatory power of Epicurus' philosophy:

[63] φυσιολογία is rendered in Latin by *naturae species ratioque*: D. N. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998), 37.

nam simul ac ratio tua coepit vociferari[64]
naturam rerum, divina mente coorta,
diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi
discedunt, totum video per inane geri res.
apparet divum numen sedesque quietae . . .
at contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa
nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur,
sed pedibus quaecumque infra per inane geruntur.
his ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua vi
tam manifesta patens ex omni parte retecta est.
(3. 14–30, with omissions)[65]

For as soon as your reason begins to proclaim the nature of things, driven on by divine mind, the terrors of the soul flee, the walls of the world recede, and I see things unfold through the entirety of the void. The power and tranquil seats of the gods appear . . . But on the other hand, nowhere can I see the regions of Acheron, although no ground lies in the way to prevent my downward gaze upon anything whatsoever which happens below my feet. Just there and then a certain divine pleasure and awe seized me, for Nature, made so manifest by your strength, was everywhere revealed.

Here once more Epicurean natural philosophy reveals the entirety of the universe, drawing back the veil which prevents most men from seeing correctly the *natura rerum*. In this section it has two particular effects: it reveals the true nature of the gods and their life, and it also reveals that the various stories told about the Underworld are untrue. In doing so it provides support for the first two *Kyriai Doxai*, by persuading us that the gods are of such a tranquil nature that they should cause us no anxiety and that there is no underworld to be feared after death. What is particularly interesting for my present concerns, however, is not simply this restatement of the all-embracing and liberating power of natural philosophy. The passage adds something new. First, Epicurus' intellect is referred to as *divina*; second, along with the awe which

[64] A piece of oracular vocabulary: Obbink, *Philodemus on Piety*, 568.

[65] Compare the sneering re-presentation of this theme by Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 14. 27. 9 *ἢ τοῦ κόσμου προκύψας Ἐπίκουρος καὶ τὸν οὐράνιον ὑπερβὰς περίβολον ἢ διά τινων κρυφίων ἂς μόνος οἶδεν ἐξελθὼν πυλῶν οὗς ἐν τῷ κενῷ κατεῖδε θεοὺς καὶ πολλὴν αὐτῶν ἐμακάρισε τρυφὴν κἀκεῖθεν ἐπιθυμητὴς γενόμενος τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ κενῷ ζηλωτὴς διαίτης, οὕτω πάντας ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ μακαρισμοῦ τούτου μετουσίαν ἐξομοιωθησομένους ἐκείνοις τοῖς θεοῖς παρακαλεῖ* . . . It is very likely that both Eusebius and Lucretius are drawing on an earlier Greek source, perhaps Epicurus himself.

grasps the poet's *persona* comes a certain *divina voluptas*.[66] The deification of Epicurus is not an uncommon theme, as I have already indicated. However, this particular reference to it is remarkable inasmuch as it is closely juxtaposed to a description of the true nature of the gods themselves. Epicurus' intellect is *divina because* it can reveal the nature of the gods. Similarly, Lucretius' *voluptas* is *divina* not simply because it is a species of religious awe. Rather, through this process of coming to understand the universe as revealed by Epicurean philosophy, Lucretius has been liberated from religious anxieties and *therefore* comes to the attainment of truly divine *ἀταραξία*.

Divina voluptas recurs in the *De rerum natura*. Lucretius invokes the Muse Calliope at 6. 94, and calls her *requies hominum divumque voluptas*. In the very first line of the poem Venus is *hominum divumque voluptas* (1. 1). I do not see that this involves a contrast with Calliope, as Segal suggests.[67] Instead, some progress must have been made in both our understanding of *voluptas* and our understanding of divinity since the first line of the first book. It has become clear not only that the pleasures of the gods are the same as the pleasures of enlightened mortals, but that this pleasure consists in a certain kind of peacefulness, of *requies*. So *requies hominum divumque voluptas* does not describe two objects. Calliope is not one thing to mortals and another to gods, since we have begun to understand that *divina voluptas* is perfectly attainable by mortals too.[68] Moreover, it is attainable by mortals once they have come to a correct attitude concerning the gods. It is therefore entirely unsurprising that immediately prior to this invocation of the Muse, that very subject has been Lucretius' preoccupation.

The primary subject of the first sections of book 6 is the explanation of celestial phenomena. However, before he begins this exposition Lucretius notes that such phenomena were often the cause of incorrect religious beliefs (58–67). He first shows how Epicureanism avoids this. After a repeated description of the all-encompassing nature of Epicurean natural philosophy (6. 64–6 = 1. 76–8), Lucretius passes on to show that we should refuse to

[66] Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, 216: 'Even the poet's emotions, as he pursues his task, are a strange mixture of the mortal and the immortal.'

[67] Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety*, 185.

[68] See also Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius*, 68–9, 153–4 and n. 96, who makes the connection between *requies hominum divumque voluptas* and *ataraxia*.

believe any proposition about the gods which would compromise their paradigmatic tranquillity (68–9). This is in order for us to engage in pious ritual correctly and without anxiety.[69] This new piety which honours the gods because of their paradigmatic tranquillity rather than out of some desire to win the gods' favour or avoid their wrath has a positive result. If I approach the shrines of the gods *placido cum pectore* (75), then my receipt of their *simulacra* will be improved:

> . . . de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur
> in mentis hominum divinae nuntia formae,
> suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace valebis.
> (6. 76–8)

In ἀταραξία you will be able to receive whatever images from a divine body, messengers of the gods' form, are carried into the minds of men.

If I approach religious practice with the correct attitude, my mind will be free to receive without the interference of incorrect opinion the *simulacra* of the paradigmatically tranquil gods.[70] In a sense, a correct relationship with the gods both requires and reinforces the correct attitude to them. In imitating their tranquillity I might come closer to a true and unadulterated reception of their *simulacra*: a true vision of divine tranquillity. It is, therefore, with this close relationship in mind that we should interpret the invocation of Lucretius' Muse as *requies hominum divumque voluptas* (6. 94).

VI

There are gods. Epicurus is a god, and is honoured as such, as anyone will be who similarly attains the correct Epicurean view of the world.[71] Being 'mortal' is no obstacle to complete happiness, nor, therefore, to the divinity which this complete happiness

[69] Cf. Philod. *De pietate* 740–2 Obbink, and Obbink, *Philodemus on Piety*, 399–400.

[70] Cf. *POxy.* II. 215, esp I. 27–II. 8 (edition by Obbink in *CPF* I. 1** 167–91).

[71] Even if we take this literally, as I wish to do (Epicurus *is* a god; his divinity is not metaphorical), this does not necessarily support the 'idealist' interpretation of the metaphysical status of Epicurean divinities. One might emphasize the tense of *fuit* at Lucr. 5. 8: Epicurus *was* (literally) a god/godly as in *Gnom. Vat.* 33 while alive, but is no more. The intermundial gods are, in contrast, everlasting. Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, i. 148, while advocating an 'idealist' interpretation, invoke the scholia to *KΔ* 1 to claim that there were *also* numerically distinct gods, and that this was the divinity attainable by sages.

constitutes. *Pleonexia* for lifetime is as misguided as *pleonexia* for pleasure. Indeed, the latter is shown to be the major cause of the former. The former is then diagnosed as a species of fearing death. If that fear is removed there is little reason to desire to live on for its own sake. In that case Epicurus has room to redirect our conception of pleasure and with it redirect our conception of the 'best life'. The goodness of a life is a matter to be decided on a hedonic scale which rejects the influence of duration. Thus the gap between god and mortal in terms of *eudaimonia* is reduced by denying the relevance of sheer mortality. If to be immortal is to live without thinking death relevant at all to one's life, then the Epicurean sage is indeed 'immortal'. Death is 'nothing to him'. Absolutely nothing. Not only does it not cause him distress; it has no part to play in his conception of his life. He transcends his mortality as Epicurus did. *Deus ille fuit.*

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SELF-BRACKETING PYRRHONISM

LUCA CASTAGNOLI

'ONE of the few brands of skepticism in the history of philosophy to . . . accept—and even embrace—the charge of self-refutation is Pyrrhonism, especially as it is represented to us by our most extensive source for Pyrrhonist "doctrine", Sextus Empiricus.'[1] Starting from this remark, in his 'Skeptical Homeopathy and Self-refutation' Mark McPherran tries to provide a detailed account of the way in which the Sceptical *φωναί* and *λόγοι*, *although self-refuting*, can nevertheless 'work'. As the similes of purgatives, of fire, and of a ladder attempt to explain—McPherran suggests—the Sceptical formulae (e.g. *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*) and arguments (the proof against proof) are supposed to refute themselves, but only *after* having obtained their expected effect on the dogmatic tenets, and having thus left the dogmatist in the beneficial condition of *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*.

What McPherran wants to do is to show that such a claim is not a 'sheer bluff', but that it is possible to reconstruct a dialectical strategy in which the admittedly self-refuting character of the

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[1] M. L. McPherran, 'Skeptical Homeopathy and Self-refutation' ['Homeopathy'], *Phronesis*, 32 (1987), 290–328 at 290–1.

Pyrrhonist's[2] position does not prevent him from defeating (or, better, curing) his dogmatic interlocutor. I shall be only incidentally concerned here with the details of McPherran's defence of Sextus, its plausibility and its troubles; what I shall argue is, more broadly, that the overall interpretation of Sextan self-refutation on which that defence is based is misleading and wrong, beginning from its very foundations. I shall argue that Sextus *never* accepts, and *so much the less* embraces, the charge of self-refutation, either in relation to his *φωναί* or concerning the proof against proof; far from that, what is interpreted by McPherran[3] as an admission of self-refutation is actually an amazingly refined tool that Sextus uses *against* the charges of inconsistency and self-refutation that the dogmatist deploys against him. At the same time, it will become clear how such a tool, although not unimpeachable, could be as effective as it is refined, and could be handled by an ancient Pyrrhonist without further external supports, *ad hoc* justifications, or philosophical bluffs.

I hope, therefore, that my reading will afford us not only a more faithful historical understanding of Sextus' Pyrrhonism and of one of its most intriguing arguments, but also an increased appreciation of the level of philosophical consistency and sophistication Sextus' thought and prose can reach.

Let us see how.

[2] Hereafter I shall use 'Pyrrhonist' and 'Sceptic' interchangeably, to refer to the adherent of the 'Sceptic way' (*σκεπτικὴ ἀγωγή*) as it is outlined in Sextus' work.

[3] McPherran's view can actually be considered almost the standard one among scholars. We shall see below that Myles Burnyeat shares that view; let me quote some other examples: 'Since nothing is true, however, it follows that not even the statements of the Skeptics themselves are true. *Sextus acknowledges* this inference, but the criticism is wide of mark. *The Skeptic doctrine is indeed self-refuting*, but only after it has destroyed all the arguments of traditional philosophy' (C. L. Stough, *Greek Skepticism: A Study in Epistemology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), 146); 'I will take this *acceptance of self-refutation* (peritrope) as a defining character of Pyrrhonian skepticism as I understand it' (R. J. Fogelin, *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification* (New York and Oxford, 1994), 4); 'At all events they [the Pyrrhonists] *happily embraced self-refutation*' (R. J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (London and New York, 1995), 18). (Emphases added.)

I refer here in particular to McPherran because he does not merely claim that ancient Pyrrhonism accepts self-refutation, but examines closely the relevant passages and tries to explain the philosophical rationale for such an acceptance. Although in this paper I criticize McPherran's overall interpretation as well as some details of it, my work is deeply indebted to his article, from which I have picked up many points and suggestions.

1. Preliminaries

1.1. *The relevant passages*

In this first section I shall just introduce very roughly the four passages that are usually supposed to attest Sextus' acceptance of self-refutation, and I shall sketch the main lines of McPherran's treatment of them. I shall not examine how McPherran tries to reconcile the supposed self-refuting character of the Pyrrhonist's utterances with the confidence Sextus exhibits in their argumentative effectiveness; what I want to do here is just to raise a preliminary terminological question from which my alternative reading starts.

In order to do that, let us begin by seeing what exactly McPherran means by 'self-refutation': 'instances of self-refutation are—for the most part—referred to by Sextus as cases of *περιτροπή*, denominating those situations where some proposal "*p*" is advanced, and then "reversed into" (*περιτρέπεται εἰς*) its contradictory "not-*p*"' ('Homeopathy', 292).

Here are the two passages from Sextus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* that supposedly manifest the self-refutation of the Sceptical *φωναί*:

> For they [the Pyrrhonists] suppose that, just as the *φωνή* 'Everything is false' says that it too, along with everything else, is false (and similarly for 'Nothing is true'), so also 'Nothing more' says that it too, along with everything else, is no more, and hence it *cancels* itself *along with* [*συμπεριγράφει*] everything else. And we say the same of the other Sceptical *φωναί*. . . Sceptics utter their own *φωναί* in such a way that they are implicitly *cancelled* [*περιγράφεσθαι*] by themselves. (*PH* 1. 14–15)[4]

> In the case of all the Sceptical *φωναί*, you should understand that we do not affirm definitely that they are true—after all, we say that they can be destroyed by themselves, being *cancelled along with* [*συμπεριγραφομένας*] what they are applied to, just as purgative drugs do not merely drain the humours from the body but drive themselves out too along with the humours. (*PH* 1. 206)

McPherran interprets Sextus as if he were overtly admitting in

[4] The translations of *PH* quoted in this section are drawn from J. Annas and J. Barnes, *Sextus Empiricus:* Outlines of Scepticism (Cambridge and New York, 1994); those of *M.* 7–8 from R. G. Bury, *Sextus Empiricus:* Against the Logicians (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1935). I have revised the translations in some cases. In the following sections the translations, where not otherwise indicated, are mine. I have freely italicized parts of the translations and of the quoted passages.

these passages that the Sceptical *φωναί* are subject to self-refutation, and more exactly to that kind of self-refutation labelled in modern terms 'absolute self-refutation',[5] i.e. that they are cases 'of single-premise reversals where the *content* of some claim is directly responsible for its *falsity*'. 'Sextus', McPherran writes, 'on occasion utilizes this form of *περιτροπή* to escape the charge that the Skeptic dogmatizes' ('Homeopathy', 292); 'as Sextus says, his various maxims, taken as straightforward assertions,[6] assert the *falsity* of themselves as well as of anything else, and that when so taken they cancel themselves along with the rest' (ibid. 295).

Let me now introduce briefly the two occurrences of the (alleged) self-refutation of the proof against proof (hereafter also 'PAP'):

> Arguments, like purgative drugs which evacuate themselves along with the matters present in the body, can actually *cancel* themselves *along with* [*συμπεριγράφειν*] the other arguments which are said to be probative. (*PH* 2. 188)

> Just as, for example, fire after consuming the fuel destroys also itself, and like as purgatives after driving the fluids out of the body expel themselves as well, so too the argument against proof, after abolishing every proof, can *cancel* also itself *along with* [*συμπεριγράφειν*] them. (*M*. 8. 480)

McPherran classifies them among those 'cases where a proposition is *falsified* by the particular *mode* in which it is presented; e.g. it is possible for "I am not speaking" to be truly asserted, but it will be falsified if I assert it by means of speech. For Sextus, such *self-refutation* occurs if someone uses a justified criterion to assert that there is no criterion of justification . . . or if he gives a sound proof for the non-existence of sound proof . . . Let this form of *περιτροπή* be called "pragmatic self-refutation"' ('Homeopathy', 293–4).

McPherran explicitly refers to the four passages just seen as instances of different forms of self-refutation (absolute in the case of the *φωναί*, pragmatic in the case of the PAPs); in Greek, *περι-*

[5] For his distinction between different forms of self-refutation McPherran is indebted to Mackie's brilliant formal analysis of self-refutation logic (J. L. Mackie, 'Self-Refutation: A Formal Analysis', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 14 (1964), 193–203).

[6] This specification is very important. Of course McPherran does not argue that Sextus maintains that his *φωναί* are absolutely self-refuting, and therefore false, *tout court*, but only when interpreted, from a dogmatic perspective, as 'propositionally-construed utterances' about what is the case in reality ('Homeopathy', 297). Unlike McPherran, however, I think that not even in this case does Sextus consider his *φωναί* self-refuting, and that not even provisionally does he want the dogmatist to interpret them in that way.

τροπή. But it is an indisputable fact that in none of those passages does the noun περιτροπή or the verb περιτρέπειν appear. The only term that links all the passages is συμπεριγράφειν (just in one case περιγράφειν, without prefix), which has been rendered in all the translations I quoted as 'to cancel along with', never 'to refute along with'.

McPherran claims that 'instances of self-refutation are—*for the most part*—referred to by Sextus as cases of περιτροπή' and, as we shall see, he is right; things being so, we could look at our cases as some of the few instances where the concept of self-refutation is expressed in different, but essentially equivalent, terms. But can (συμ)περιγράφειν be regarded as synonymous with περιτρέπειν? Or does Sextus at least use it somewhere else in close connection with the concept of self-refutation (apart from the alleged self-refutation of the Pyrrhonist, whose only instances are admittedly the four I quoted above)?

Before proceeding, it is necessary to survey Sextus' usage of these and some other related terms.

1.2. περιτρέπειν/περιτροπή

The verb περιτρέπειν occurs several times in Sextus' works, almost always in the passive form. It is possible (and I think philosophically rewarding) to distinguish in Sextus' usage two distinct nuances of περιτρέπεσθαι:

(1) generically, 'to be overturned', 'to be undermined', 'to be overthrown';[7]
(2) more specifically (and usually), 'to be reversed', 'to be refuted *by oneself*'.[8]

The latter sense is not only more frequent, but also much more interesting for us here;[9] the substantival form περιτροπή[10] seems to be

[7] See *PH* 2. 206, 222; 3. 28, 161, 197; *M.* 1. 196; 7. 11; 8. 61, 361; 9. 342.

[8] See *PH* 1. 122; 2. 64, 76, 78, 88, 91, 179; 3. 19; *M.* 7. 337, 440; 8. 55, 295 (*quater*), 296, 360, 463; 9. 204; 10. 18.

[9] Not only is reflexivity, a fundamental component of self-refutation, absent from all the passages in which περιτρέπειν has the former sense, but also truth and falsity, which, as we shall see below, are central ingredients of (self-)refutation, are absent from most of them.

[10] See *PH* 1. 200; 2. 128, 133, 185, 187; *M.* 7. 389, 390.

coined directly from that very second usage, common translations being 'turning about', 'reversal', 'self-refutation'.[11]

περιτροπή (or περιτρέπειν in its second sense) is what we had expected to find in the four alleged occurrences of the Sceptical acceptance of self-refutation, according to McPherran's account; but, as seen above, our expectations have been disappointed. However, it will be useful to spend a few words on this 'self-refutation'; this will permit us to decide later whether Sextus is attributing a self-refuting character also to his own utterances, although using different words.

As Myles Burnyeat notices, 'any refutation, of course, establishes the contrary of what it refutes'; but in Sextus περιτρέπειν 'tends particularly to be used of the special case where the thesis to be refuted itself serves as a premise for its own refutation, where starting out with "*p*" we deduce "not-*p*" *and so conclude that the original premise was false*'.[12] We find in Sextus several cases in which the Pyrrhonist charges the dogmatist with self-refutation, and also cases in which it is the dogmatist who charges the Pyrrhonist. Let us begin with a standard example of self-refutation, belonging to the former group:

> Now as to those who assert that all things are false, we proved above that they are confuted by themselves [περιτρεπομένους]. For if all things are false, the statement 'All things are false', being one of the 'all things', will be false. And if the statement 'All things are false' is false, its contradictory, 'Not all things are false', will be true. Therefore, if all things are false, not all things are false. (*M.* 8. 55)

There are negative dogmatists asserting that 'All things are false'; but, Sextus says, in doing that they expose themselves to περιτροπή: their very assertion commits them to the final admission of the truth of the contradictory of that assertion:[13]

(1) All things are false.
(2) It is false that all things are false. self-application of (1)
(3) It is true that not all things are false. from (2)

[11] There is finally a single occurrence of the adverb ἀπεριτρέπτως (*M.* 1. 53), with the meaning of 'without being turned about', 'without being refuted by oneself'.

[12] M. F. Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self-refutation in Later Greek Philosophy' ['Protagoras'], *Philosophical Review*, 85 (1976), 44–69 at 48. I shall suggest in the Conclusion that the clause I have italicized is questionable.

[13] For the self-refuting character of 'Everything is false' and 'Everything is true' see Arist. *Metaph.* Γ 8, 1012^{b}13–18, and n. 101 below.

(4) Not all things are false.	from (3) (*περιτροπή* of (1))

According to McPherran, this case should be catalogued as an instance of *absolute* self-refutation.[14]

Here is a second, more complex, example of *περιτροπή*:

> But the dogmatists are accustomed to retort by inquiring 'How ever does the Sceptic show that there is no criterion? For he asserts this either without any criterion or with the help of a criterion; but if it is without any criterion, he will not be trusted, while if it is with a criterion, he will be self-refuted [*περιτραπήσεται*], and while asserting that there is no criterion he will agree to adopt a criterion in order to confirm that assertion.' (*M.* 7. 440)

According to Burnyeat, the view subject to self-refutation here ('No criterion exists') conflicts not with itself, but with the *way* the Pyrrhonist advances it (i.e. by using some criterion); as seen above, we would have, in modern terms, an instance of *pragmatic* self-refutation ('Protagoras', 51).

Burnyeat identifies a third kind of self-refutation in Sextus' works, which he labels '*dialectical* self-refutation'. Here is his example:

> One cannot say that every appearance is true, because this refutes itself (*διὰ τὴν περιτροπήν*), as Democritus and Plato taught in opposing Protagoras; for if every appearance is true, the judgement that not every appearance is true, being based on an appearance, will also be true, and thus the judgement that every appearance is true will become false. (*M.* 7. 389–90)

(1) Every appearance is true.	
(2) It is an appearance that not every appearance is true.	
(3) It is true that not every appearance is true.	from (1) and (2) (*περιτροπή* of (1))
(4) It is false that every appearance is true.	from (3)

Here 'Every appearance is true' is falsified neither by its own content (as in our first example), nor by the way it is presented (as in the latter); 'it is the act of submitting a thesis for debate or maintaining it in the face of disagreement that causes its reversal and shows it up as false' ('Protagoras', 59).[15] The additional premiss

[14] Burnyeat adopts here the different label of 'single-premise reversal'.

[15] On this point, during our analysis it will be useful to keep always in mind some remarks by Anthony Long and David Sedley: 'The Stoic view of argument

(2) that the refutation requires to work is provided by the dialectical context of the philosophical debate between Protagoras and his adversaries. Protagoras maintains that 'Every appearance is true';[16] his adversary can always reply that it *appears* to him, or to someone else, that *not* every appearance is true (namely, he can reassert the common-sense view); Protagoras has to admit that his adversary's appearance is also true, and thus that his initial judgement 'Every appearance is true' is false.

Burnyeat is absolutely right when he remarks that 'logic at this [Sextus'] period had not yet lost its connection with dialectic and disputation' ('Protagoras', 55); and the only way of making sense of the charge of *περιτροπή* against Protagoras here is putting it in its proper dialectical context.

Now let us see whether the only terms we found linking the four passages of sect. 1.1 (*περιγράφειν/συμπεριγράφειν*) share, at least somewhere or partly, the meaning that Sextus' *περιτροπή* has just been shown to possess and that McPherran confidently attributes to them.

1.3. *περιγράφειν/συμπεριγράφειν*

We have found an occurrence of *περιγράφειν* in *PH* 1. 15, where our quoted translation said that the Sceptical *φωναί* are *cancelled* by themselves (*ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν περιγράφεσθαι*). McPherran was interpreting that as an overt admission by Sextus of the (absolute) *self-refutation* which his *φωναί* are exposed to, clearly paraphrasing 'to cancel' with 'to refute', 'to falsify'.

But an examination of all the other occurrences of *περιγράφειν* makes it clear that such a paraphrase is, to say the least, ungrounded, since this term is *never* used by Sextus to indicate some form of refutation or self-refutation, and actually is not employed with any univocal or technical sense at all. Besides 'to cancel', most of the possible meanings the verb *περιγράφειν* can assume in ancient Greek are represented in Sextus' works: 'exclude' (*M.* 7. 268); 'delineate',

had a dialectical background in which each premise was posed as a question to an interlocutor and required his agreement. Despite the great formality imposed by the logical handbooks, this dialectical aspect was never lost sight of' (*The Hellenistic Philosophers*, i (Cambridge, 1987), 218).

[16] I am not concerned here with the question in what measure this can be considered as a doctrine of the historical Protagoras.

'define', 'determine' (*M.* 1. 68; 6. 45); 'draw a line around', 'circumscribe' (*M.* 5. 79; 9. 257); 'conclude' (*PH* 2. 259; 3. 279).[17]

As for *συμπεριγράφειν*, its several occurrences in Sextus are the earliest attested in the extant Greek literature.[18] This does not necessarily prove that *συμπεριγράφειν* is a Sextan neologism, for it is not implausible to conjecture that the verb had already appeared in the previous, unfortunately wrecked, Pyrrhonian tradition. What is beyond any doubt is that in Sextus' usage *συμπεριγράφειν* did not inherit the wide semantic range of *περιγράφειν*: in all its occurrences *συμπεριγράφειν* takes one and the same of the five possible meanings mentioned above: roughly, 'to cancel'. Not only does Sextus attribute to *συμπεριγράφειν* a single meaning, but he also makes a quite specialized use of it, by employing it in very homogeneous contexts. Here are a couple of examples in which Sextus' standard use of the verb is apparent:

> If there is no right, neither will there be a left, owing to the fact that each of these is relative; and if there is no left, the notion of right also is cancelled at the same time [*συμπεριγράφεται*]. (*M.* 8. 164)

> Hence on all these grounds the criterion by which objects are to be judged is found to be inapprehensible. Since the other criteria too are cancelled along with [*συμπεριγραφομένων*] this one . . . (*PH* 2. 46–7)

'Right' and 'left' are correlative terms and concepts; if one of them no longer existed, the other one would be *cancelled* as well (note that here 'would be cancelled' cannot but mean 'would no longer exist', 'would no longer be conceivable', and not, say, 'would be *false*'). In the second example, the criterion 'by which' (i.e. man) is found to be inapprehensible; hence the other criteria are *cancelled along with* this one, each of them being strictly related to the very concept of 'man'. In this case 'are cancelled' clearly means 'turn out to be inapprehensible'; if the notion of man is inapprehensible, it is *a fortiori* plausible that the human senses or intellect (criteria 'through which') and human appearances (criteria 'in virtue of which') are inapprehensible too.

[17] The noun *περιγραφή* (*M.* 3. 86; 5. 23; 7. 277; 8. 161, 162, 387, 394; 9. 103, 261 (*bis*); 10. 15, 263) shares only a part of the semantic richness of the verb, appearing always in the phrase *κατὰ περιγραφήν*, usually with the meaning 'alone', 'independently'.

[18] *PH* 1. 14, 206; 2. 47, 84 (*bis*), 188; 3. 1, 97, 130; *M.* 7. 12; 8. 164, 339, 480. Two occurrences of the word are attested in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 6. 15. 119; 8. 7. 22), but it is likely that Sextus is at least one generation older than Clement.

Most of the other passages in which *συμπεριγράφειν* occurs share the same general structure: there is something, say x, that Sextus proves to be not-P (most times non-existent), against the dogmatists who hold that x is P; and there is something else, say y, strictly related to x (in most cases they are correlative concepts), that is claimed to be not-P as well, because of its relation with x. Sextus maintains that in these cases there is no need of a separate proof that y is not-P, because in the very act of proving that x is not-P it has been automatically shown that y is not-P as well. It could be said that y is indirectly exposed to the same fate as x, *in the very moment* in which x is.[19]

What we have just seen strongly suggests that *συμπεριγράφειν* is somehow alien to our concept of 'refutation'; something is refuted, strictly speaking, when it is shown to be *false* through some form of argument. But 'is true' never appears as the predicate P in Sextus' usage, and a good reason for this is that x and y are always objects or concepts (and not statements), in relation to which it would not be proper to speak of truth or falsity, rather than of existence/non-existence or conceivability/non-conceivability.[20]

But if *συμπεριγράφειν* expresses a kind of cancellation that cannot be identified with refutation, *a fortiori* it does not look a promising candidate for Sextus to use for confessing the self-refutation of his own *φωναί* and *λόγοι*. As I remarked above, McPherran does not seem to notice this, nor to appreciate any substantial semantic difference between *περιτρέπειν* (and *περιτροπή*), on the one hand, and *(συμ)περιγράφειν*, on the other.[21] It could be objected that

[19] *περιτροπή* could be schematized in this way:

$$p \rightarrow (q \rightarrow \ldots) \rightarrow \neg p$$

(where p and q are statements). Where the verb *συμπεριγράφειν* is used we usually find something like:

$$\neg Px \rightarrow \neg Py$$

[20] The second requirement too does not seem to be wholly satisfied: in the very moment in which x is proved to be not-P, y is shown to be not-P as well, without any need of further inferential steps (it is possible, however, that some further inferential step is needed to *realize* that y is not-P).

[21] The same *de facto* identification between *περιτρέπειν* (and *περιτροπή*) and *(συμ)περιγράφειν* is made by Hankinson: '*Epoche* is not, then, some further intellectual conclusion which the Sceptic then reaches. Hence he can be perfectly happy about the self-refuting (*or as Sextus prefers to say*, self-cancelling) nature of his expressions, or *phonai*' (*The Sceptics*, 299).

By saying that Sextus adopts a specialized use of *συμπεριγράφειν*, I mean that this verb is usually employed to denote that particular kind of argument I have

(συμ)περιγράφειν does not need to mean *literally* 'to refute (along with)' in order to signify a genuine self-refutation in the four passages we are interested in; after all, I myself suggested that the meaning of that verb is in some way context-sensitive and nothing prevents us *a priori* from filling that indeterminacy with the concepts of falsification and refutation (the predicate *P* could well be 'is true' just in our passages).[22] In this case, 'cancelled (along with)' could perfectly be paraphrased with 'shown to be false (along with)', and self-refutation would be knocking at the door again.

I shall argue in the next sections that a thorough analysis of those passages rules out this possibility, both for textual and for logically compelling reasons, and that a much more appropriate (and appealing) translation can be found for (συμ)περιγράφειν. What I wanted to do here was only to achieve some terminological elucidation that will be useful later and to raise a preliminary question that suggests—I believe—the need for a radical rethinking about the problem of the alleged Sceptical acceptance of self-refutation.

As we have seen, Sextus possesses quasi-technical terms to express the concept of self-refutation: περιτρέπειν and περιτροπή. Why on earth in the act of accepting the charge of self-refutation should he not use these words (the very words which—as we shall see—

described, but not that it is the *only* term tailored to this task. Quite surprisingly, συμπεριτρέπειν (whose six occurrences all appear in *PH*: 2. 188, 193; 3. 103, 109, 130, 259) is used in exactly the same contexts as συμπεριγράφειν, and with an almost identical meaning. It seems that this compound verb has inherited the first broader nuance of περιτρέπεσθαι: generation and destruction are 'overturned' (in the plain sense that they turn out to be non-existent) together with addition, subtraction, and natural change (*PH* 3. 109); teachers and learners are 'overthrown' (again, turn out to be non-existent) along with what is taught (*PH* 3. 259); syllogisms are 'undermined' (turn out to be unreal) together with the reality of proof (*PH* 2. 193), etc. It is clear enough that in all these examples συμπεριτρέπειν could be replaced with συμπεριγράφειν (and so the suggested translations with 'cancelled') without any appreciable shift in the meaning of the passages.

There is another verb that Sextus uses as a *de facto* synonym of συμπεριγράφειν and συμπεριτρέπειν: συναναιρεῖν ('to destroy along with', 'to abolish along with'): *PH* 3. 40, 101, 130; *M*. 1. 30, 40, 123; 3. 18, 82, 94; 6. 53; 7. 74, 395, 444; 8. 3, 60, 164, 338, 339; 9. 313, 357, 406; 10. 100, 236, 245, 269; 11. 90, 234. This synonymy relation is apparent at *PH* 3. 130: 'And space too is overturned along with [συμπεριτρέπεται] them: for if space is a large place, it is cancelled along with [συμπεριγράφεται] place; if it is an interval partly occupied by a body and partly void, it is destroyed along with [συναναιρεῖται] both of them'.

[22] After all, not even περιτρέπειν/περιτροπή *literally* mean in ancient Greek 'to refute (oneself)'/'self-refutation'.

the dogmatist has employed to formulate his charge in the case of the PAP)? And why should he adopt a verb, *συμπεριγράφειν*, that he does not seem to employ anywhere else to convey the idea of self-refutation (nor, strictly speaking, of refutation)? Such questions are bound to be an exegetical puzzle for anyone who embraces the standard reading that makes Sextus admit that the Pyrrhonist *refutes* himself.

Let us see now how to save Sextus' consistency in word-choice and, at the same time, in philosophical argumentation.

2. The self-bracketing of the Sceptical *φωναί* (*PH* 1. 13–15, 1. 206–208)

2.1. *The two senses of δογματίζειν*

Our first passage is entirely included in a paragraph which, as its title (*Εἰ δογματίζει ὁ Σκεπτικός*) makes clear, is meant by Sextus to give an answer to this question: does the Sceptic dogmatize? Here is Sextus' answer to that question:

> When we say that the Sceptic does not hold beliefs [*μὴ δογματίζειν*], we do not take 'belief' [*δόγμα*] in the sense in which some say, quite generally, that belief is acquiescing [*εὐδοκεῖν*] in something (for the Sceptic assents to the affections [*πάθεσι*] compelled in accord with appearances—for example, he would not say, when heated (or chilled), 'I think I am not heated (or chilled)'). Rather, we say that he does not hold beliefs in the sense in which some say that belief is assent [*συγκατάθεσιν*] to some unclear object of investigation in the sciences (for the Pyrrhonist does not assent to anything unclear [*οὐδενὶ τῶν ἀδήλων*]). (*PH* 1. 13)

The tacit allusion is to the polemic between Sceptics and dogmatists, and to the common dogmatic charge that the Sceptics do not really live *ἀδοξάστως*, 'without beliefs'.[23] The Sceptics claim to be in a perfect and untroubled condition of suspension of judgement (*ἐποχή*); the dogmatists think that this claim is insincere and that the behaviour (linguistic and otherwise) of the Sceptics betrays the fact that they do actually hold beliefs.

Sextus responds that when the Sceptic denies holding beliefs[24]

[23] See e.g. Aristocles ap. Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 14. 18. 9–12; D.L. 9. 102–4.

[24] The explicit reference is to the end of the previous chapter (*PH* 1. 12), in which Sextus said that 'the chief constitutive principle of Scepticism is the claim that to

he is not denying his mere acquiescence in the *πάθη* he finds himself with; he admits involuntarily assenting to them, and in this generic sense of *δόγμα* the Sceptic can also be said to dogmatize (*δογματίζειν*).[25] But, on the other hand, the Sceptic does not dogmatize in the narrower sense in which *δόγμα* is assent to some of the unclear things (*ἄδηλα*) investigated in the sciences.

Even though in Sextus' work we find no explicit definition of *ἄδηλον*, it will be sufficient for our present purposes to say, roughly, that for the Pyrrhonist all those things are 'unclear' that happen to be the case in external reality (*τὰ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενα*).[26] *It appears to me now* that honey is sweet: this 'appearing' is a *φαινόμενον*, something which leads me, without willing it, to assent, engendering in me a *πάθος* in which I cannot but acquiesce. But that honey *is* (or *is not*) actually sweet is not a *φαινόμενον*, rather something *about* the thing underlying the *φαινόμενον*, about the *nature* of honey, that is, about external reality. It is therefore one of the unclear matters investigated by the dogmatists, about which the Pyrrhonist withholds his assent and has no beliefs. The Pyrrhonist will not be in dread of saying that honey *appears* sweet to him, and overtly admits that he holds beliefs in this weaker and uncommitted sense; but he will never compromise himself with the claim that honey *is* sweet (*PH* 1. 19–20). Even if sometimes he uses 'is', he will do so loosely, in the sense of 'appears' (*PH* 1. 135, 198; *M.* 11. 19).

every account an equal account is opposed; for we think that from this we come to *hold no beliefs* [*μὴ δογματίζειν*]'.

[25] It represents actually a terminological anomaly for Sextus to label the Pyrrhonist's acquiescence 'belief', even though in a weaker sense; from here onward when I say 'belief' or 'believe' without specifications I shall always take them with the strong meaning of 'dogmatic(ally) assent(ing) to something *ἄδηλον*'.

[26] For the broad sense in which I here use 'things' and 'external reality', some notes by Benson Mates will be helpful: 'Whereas most modern epistemologists seem to assume that the external world is made up of individual entities to which it makes sense to ascribe spatiotemporal coordinates . . . the ancients applied the term "what exists externally" much more widely. Any assertion whatever, the truth value of which is taken to be independent of what the soul perceives or thinks (in other words, which does not merely express *pathe* of the soul but purports to describe something beyond these, something that is *really so* regardless of what may or may not seem to be the case) is taken to assert the existence of a component or components of the external world' (*The Skeptic Way: Sextus Empiricus's Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (New York and Oxford, 1995), 19).

2.2. *The grammar of* οὐδὲν μᾶλλον[27]

But not even [ἀλλ' οὐδέ] in uttering [προφέρεσθαι] the Sceptical φωναί about unclear matters [περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων]—for example, 'Nothing more' [οὐδὲν μᾶλλον], or 'I determine nothing' [οὐδὲν ὁρίζω], or one of the other φωναί which we shall later discuss—does he [the Sceptic] hold beliefs. For he who holds beliefs posits *as real* [ὡς ὑπάρχον τίθεται] what he is said to believe, whereas the Sceptic posits these φωναί not as absolutely real [οὐχ ὡς πάντως ὑπαρχούσας]. (*PH* I. 14)

ἀλλ' οὐδέ at the beginning of the passage makes it clear what worries Sextus here. During his philosophical activity (σκέψις), the Sceptic gives utterance to certain expressions he himself calls φωναί ('Nothing more', 'I determine nothing', 'I suspend judgement', 'Everything is undetermined', 'Opposed to every account there is an equal account', etc.). As Benson Mates has noticed, 'the word *phone*, in its fundamental sense, refers to the sound of voice, whether of man or of any other animal with a larynx and lungs',[28] and we shall see that it was not by chance that the Pyrrhonists chose this non-commital term to label their utterances. The φωναί are essentially vocal sounds (*voces*) the Sceptics utter;[29] but it is not prima facie apparent whether the kind of generalizations most of them seem to signify express the Sceptic's acquiescence in his πάθη, or, rather, maxims, slogans, about reality. There is thus room for the dogmatist to charge the Sceptic with holding beliefs—in the strong sense which the Sceptic does not wish to admit—by taking up a definite position about unclear matters. But—Sextus replies—while to believe that *p*[30] in that strong sense you have to posit that *p* as real (i.e. as being the case), the Sceptic does not posit his φωναί as absolutely[31] real, i.e. he does not affirm that they truly describe what is the case in the external world.

[27] The theses on the grammar and self-cancelling property of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον which I shall present in sect. 2.2 and in the first part of sect. 2.3 are strictly related to the ones held and argued by Corti on the same issues in chs. 2 and 3 of his *Scale pirroniane*. In some notes below I shall report Corti's main theses and clarify which of them I have adopted and which I have refused in my interpretation.

[28] Mates, *The Skeptic Way*, 65.

[29] In the case of the Sceptical φωναί, Sextus' standard verb for 'to utter' is προφέρειν (*PH* I. 14, 15, 188 (*bis*), 191, 193, 204; *M.* II. 147); he also employs alternatively the noun προφορά with the genitive (*PH* I. 15 (*bis*)). None the less, we find also ἐπιφθέγγεσθαι (*PH* I. 187, 213), λέγειν (*PH* I. 187), and φάναι (*PH* I. 208).

[30] In this paper I shall use the propositional variables quite loosely, either for sentences or for the states of affairs signified by sentences.

[31] The exact meaning of this 'absolutely' will become apparent below.

As we shall discover below, although the *φωναί* are not regarded by the Sceptic as absolutely real, they have nevertheless a conditional and relative value; it is to express such value that the Sceptic wants to utter, does utter, and considers himself allowed to utter these 'sounds'. But *before* explaining how his *φωναί* are to be taken, Sextus will take care to rule out the very possibility of misinterpreting them as formulae expressing dogmatic beliefs about reality.[32]

What immediately follows is introduced by Sextus as an explanation (*γάρ*) of the fact that the Sceptic does not attribute an absolute reality to his *φωναί*:

> For he realizes [*ὑπολαμβάνει γάρ*] that, just as the phrase 'Everything is false' says that it too, along with the other things, is false (and similarly for 'Nothing is true'), so also *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* says that it too, along with the other things, is *οὐ μᾶλλον*, and hence *ἑαυτὴν συμπεριγράφει* with the other things. And we say the same also of the other Sceptical *φωναί*. (*PH* 1. 14)

As seen above (pp. 268–9), 'Everything is false' is self-*referring* and self-*refuting* (falling into its own scope, it comes to say that it itself is false, along with all the other things, and therefore that its contradictory is true). We are now told that, *in the same way* (*ὥσπερ . . . οὕτως*), *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἑαυτὴν συμπεριγράφει* with the other things, and that the Sceptic's realization of this *is the reason* for

[32] This interpretation of the structure of *PH* 1. 14–15 is related to Corti's in *Scale pirroniane*. According to Corti, in *PH* Sextus hints that the Sceptic uses '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' in two different ways. Most passages show that he adopts this elliptical formula to indicate the statement (S1) *οὐ μᾶλλον τόδε ἢ τόδε*, meaning the *singular* phrase $\neg Ma\beta$: 'Given the two dogmatic theses α and β which I have just examined, I am not able to decide which I should believe and which not.' Since it describes a *πάθος* of *ἐποχή* felt by the Sceptic, it is a *non-dogmatic* statement (pp. 77–87). But in *PH* 1. 14–15, where Sextus ascribes to *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* the property of being self-cancelling (and thus self-referring), this formula should stand for a statement which must be *universal* and *dogmatic*, i.e. (S2) $\forall pq \neg Mpq$: 'Given any dogmatic thesis p and its antithetical thesis q, I am not able to decide which I should believe and which not' (pp. 107–10). According to Corti, Sextus' reply in *PH* 1. 14–15 is divided into two parts. In the former, when he ascribes to *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* the property of being self-cancelling, Sextus is speaking of the cases in which the Sceptic utters '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' in the meaning of (S2), and he explains that he does not dogmatize in doing so because of the self-cancelling property of (S2). In the latter, Sextus is referring to the cases in which the Sceptic utters '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' in the meaning of (S1), and he explains that he does not dogmatize in doing so, since (S1) describes a *πάθος* experienced by the speaker (pp. 111–13).

As I shall explain, I too believe that in *PH* 1. 14–15 Sextus distinguishes a dogmatic and a non-dogmatic interpretation of '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*', but I argue that he does so only to *discard* the dogmatic one.

which he does not advance the absolute truth of this *φωνή*. How exactly should we here interpret the verb *συμπεριγράφειν*? How is the argument supposed to work?

It is time to learn a little more about the protagonist of this section. From the section of *PH* about the Sceptical *φωναί* (1. 187–208) we learn

(1) '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' (interchangeable with '*οὐ μᾶλλον*', 'No more') is elliptical: it implicitly stands for 'No more one thing than the other' (*οὐ μᾶλλον τόδε ἢ τόδε*, *PH* 1. 188).[33]

(2) It makes clear (*δηλοῖ*) the Pyrrhonist's *πάθος*; because of the *ἰσοσθένεια* of the opposed (i.e. conflicting) objects, the Pyrrhonist ends in equilibrium (*ἀρρεψία*), i.e. he assents to neither side (*PH* 1. 190), where *ἰσοσθένεια* means 'equality in what appears persuasive [*πιθανόν*] to us [the Pyrrhonists]'. '*οὐδὲν*

[33] I have translated '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' as 'Nothing more' to preserve a certain degree of ambiguity I see in the Greek phrase. Just as '*οὐδέν*' in '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' can be taken either as a neuter pronoun or as an adverb, so 'nothing' in 'Nothing more' can be intended either as the subject (i.e. 'Nothing *is* more'), or as an adverb modifying the comparative 'more' (i.e. 'Not at all more', 'Nowise more'). I think that there are a few clues suggesting that the use as a pronoun is the one Sextus has in his mind when he speaks of the *φωνὴ* '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*':

(1) As we have seen, Sextus compares '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' with phrases in which '*οὐδέν*' is clearly used as a pronoun ('*οὐδὲν ὁρίζω*', '*οὐδέν ἐστι ἀληθές*'), or which are generalizations ('*πάντα ἐστὶ ψευδῆ*').

(2) '*οὐδέν*' employed adverbially is not part of Sextus' usage (apart from the idiom '*οὐδὲν ἧττον*', which is always used, however, as a conjunction). Not even where we would expect it do we find this adverbial use: Sextus writes that *ἡ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἑαυτήν φησι μὴ μᾶλλον εἶναι*. The use of '*μή*' instead of '*μηδέν*' can be explained here either by saying that, as Sextus is happy to admit, he uses language loosely (and so is not in dread of saying that '"Nowise more" says that it too is "no more"'), or by saying that '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' here actually means 'Nothing (is) more', in which case it would be normal to say that '"Nothing is more" says that it too, along with the other things, is "no more"'.

(3) At *PH* 1. 188 Sextus writes: 'For we do not, as some suppose, adopt "*οὐ μᾶλλον*" in specific enquiries [*ἐν ταῖς εἰδικαῖς ζητήσεσι*], and "*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*" in generic enquiries [*ἐν ταῖς γενικαῖς*], but we utter "*οὐ μᾶλλον*" and "*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*" indifferently.' Even if Sextus reminds us that the two forms have actually the same deep grammar, there remains the question of figuring out a possible origin of the misinterpretation Sextus takes care to avoid in the passage seen above (a passage which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been explained by commentators). And I think that we have a plausible explanation if we understand the difference between the surface meanings of '*οὐ μᾶλλον*' and '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' here as the difference between the non-apparently general formula 'No more', to be uttered at the end of specific investigations, and the apparently general 'Nothing is more', to be used at the end of generic enquiries (the difference between the less emphatic 'No more' and the more emphatic 'Nowise more', on the contrary, cannot explain why on earth one should think that the former is used *ἐν ταῖς εἰδικαῖς ζητήσεσι*, the latter *ἐν ταῖς γενικαῖς*).

μᾶλλον' stands for 'I do not know which of these things I should assent to and which not assent to' (*PH* 1. 191), or for an equivalent question.

(3) The Sceptic does not use his φωναί about all things universally, but *only* about those unclear things, objects of dogmatic enquiry (*PH* 1. 208), which he himself has examined (*PH* 1. 199, 203).

For (1), (2), and (3) οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον corresponds to a general formula about pairs of unclear conflicting matters which the Sceptic has examined; its meaning is: 'For every pair of conflicting unclear matters *p* and *q* I have examined, it appears to me now that *p* is as persuasive as *q* and therefore I do not know which of these things I should assent to and which not assent to.' But we know from *PH* 1. 13 that assenting to something ἄδηλον is dogmatically believing (δογματίζειν) it, so we can finally analyse the meaning of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον in this way:

($\neg M$) For every pair of conflicting unclear matters *p* and *q I* have examined, *it appears to me now* that *p* is as persuasive as *q*, and therefore *I* can believe neither the one nor the other (*I* suspend judgement).

This being the deep grammar of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον,[34] it is possible now to establish what it means that 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον συμπεριγράφει itself along with the other things'. We know that this meaning should guarantee both some parallelism with 'Everything is false' and an explanation of why οὐδὲν μᾶλλον is not posited by the Pyrrhonist as absolutely real (*contra* the charge of dogmatizing).

We inherited from the previous section a rough translation for συμπεριγράφειν, 'to cancel along with', whose precise meaning is to be further determined as we proceed. Let us try to understand this context-sensitive verb as meaning here 'to refute along with', 'to make false along with'. It does not take long to realize that we would come to McPherran's interpretation of the passage: οὐδὲν

[34] Of course, this is the grammar οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον has *in Sextus* (and presumably in late Pyrrhonism), and not in ancient Scepticism *tout court* (and so much the less in ancient philosophy).

For a similar analysis of the meaning of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον in Sextus see P. De Lacy, 'οὐ μᾶλλον and the antecedents of ancient Scepticism', *Phronesis*, 3 (1958), 59–71 at 69–70. For Corti's different view that οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον in its standard meaning does not signify a *general* avowal, but a *singular* non-dogmatic statement, (S1), see above, n. 32.

μᾶλλον says 'no more' of itself, as well as of the other things, and so it *refutes* itself along with them. οὐδὲν μᾶλλον would be subject to absolute self-refutation, its content being directly responsible for its *falsity*. The parallelism with 'Everything is false' would be complete: both of them would be self-referring and absolutely self-refuting. It is also quite easily understandable why the realization of the self-refuting character of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον could guarantee that the Pyrrhonist is not dogmatizing when he utters it; the Pyrrhonist could never take as 'absolutely real' something he knows to be absolutely self-*refuting*, and therefore necessarily *false*.

There are two main difficulties I detect in this interpretation. I have already raised the first one above: why does Sextus not use here his standard verb περιτρέπειν (or the noun περιτροπή), if he is really speaking of self-refutation? But apart from this urgent terminological question, I think that there is an even more puzzling and primary point to raise against this reading: how on earth could οὐδὲν μᾶλλον be absolutely self-refuting? 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον refutes (makes false) itself along with the other things'; but οὐδὲν μᾶλλον does not make *anything* false! We found in the deep grammar of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον the epistemic concepts of appearance, degree of persuasiveness, assent, and belief, *not* the semantic concepts of truth or falsity. '*p* no more than *q*' does not mean '*p* is false and *q* as well' (nor '*p* is true and *q* as well'); its actual meaning is: I can believe neither that *p* nor that *q* because they appear to me equally persuasive.

It is simply mysterious to me how the self-application of this φωνή could be a self-refutation (furthermore an absolute one), and conduce to its own falsity.

2.3. *The* περιγραφή *argument: Pyrrhonian brackets*

Let me now present my alternative interpretation of the whole passage, based on a more 'relaxed' paraphrase of 'cancel', or, better, on what I take to be the exact shade of meaning the verb συμπεριγράφειν has in our passages.

As seen above, the dogmatist charges the Pyrrhonist with holding beliefs, a disposition which would be betrayed by his utterance of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον and, more generally, of the Sceptical φωναί; not only does the Pyrrhonist reply that he does not posit οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real (and thus does not dogmatize), but he also wants to provide an unquestionable reason for this. We know that hold-

ing a belief (in the strong sense we are interested in here) means giving one's assent to something ἄδηλον, and that for the Pyrrhonist whatever happens to be the case in reality, as opposed to what merely appears to him, is to be considered ἄδηλον. Thus, in order for the Sceptic to hold beliefs in uttering οὐδὲν μᾶλλον, this φωνή itself should signify something ἄδηλον, that is, it should stand for a truth-claim about some objective state of affairs or feature of the external world. But we know from our previous acquaintance with the grammar of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον that when the Sceptic utters this φωνή he is not *asserting* anything absolute, *de re*, but just *expressing* something relative, *de se*: he is voicing his mental state of equilibrium and suspension of judgement, and what appears to him about the persuasive force of unclear matters. What does it mean, on the contrary, 'to posit οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real'? I believe it means to use οὐδὲν μᾶλλον to assert implicitly a maxim like the following:

($\neg M^*$) For every pair of conflicting unclear matters *p* and *q*, *p is* as persuasive as *q* and therefore *one* should believe neither the one nor the other (*one* must suspend judgement).

Although $\neg M^*$ looks, at first glance, almost identical to $\neg M$, it radically differs from it. It is the quasi-modal operator 'it appears to me now that' and the first-person pronoun 'I' that attest that $\neg M$ is a mere avowal of the speaker's frame of mind, and not a pretentious statement about reality. But in $\neg M^*$ these two hints are replaced by the verb 'to be' (unqualified) and the impersonal pronoun 'one', and this is why $\neg M^*$ is to be taken as a truth-claim about the external world, if we understand, as Sextus does, 'external world' in a broad sense: 'We may say . . . that *ta ektos hupokeimena*, for a given person at a given time, would include any and all things and states of affairs that he takes to exist or to be the case independently of the present *pathe* of his soul.'[35] If posited ὡς πάντως ὑπαρχούσα, οὐδὲν μᾶλλον signifies something ἄδηλον, the *actual* equipoise of the *objective* force of persuasiveness of all τὰ ἄδηλα. It does not record that the Sceptic has found all the conflicting unclear matters *he has examined* equally persuasive, but claims that *all*[36] the conflicting

[35] Mates, *The Skeptic Way*, 19. See also above, n. 26.

[36] The idea that the absoluteness of $\neg M^*$, as opposed to the first-person character of $\neg M$, probably implies also a lack of restrictions in the universality of the formula came to me from Corti's considerations about the difference between the singular formula (S1) and the universal (S2) (*Scale pirroniane*, 107–10; see above, n. 32).

ἄδηλα *are* equally persuasive, that is, that the possible reasons in favour of the ones and those in favour of the others are really equally strong (or weak), independently of what can (rightly or wrongly) appear to Tom, Dick, and Harry. And presumably $\neg M^*$ hints also at the fact that this objective ἰσοσθένεια is deep-rooted in an *intrinsic* indeterminacy of the world or in an *intrinsic* weakness of human mind;[37] or both of them. $\neg M^*$ does not announce that, *at the moment*, *the speaker* suspends judgement about certain unclear matters, but that *everyone* must *always* suspend judgement, because it is the real nature of things that commands ἐποχή.

By saying that the Sceptic does not posit οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real, Sextus wants to clarify that in uttering this φωνή the Sceptic is not implicitly asserting (and assenting to) $\neg M^*$, or something similar, and that therefore he is not falling into dogmatism. A formula like $\neg M^*$ is not the meaning οὐδὲν μᾶλλον has for the Sceptic, but a misinterpretation of it;[38] the charge of dogmatism deployed against the Sceptic finally rests on a misunderstanding of the actual significance of the Sceptical language, which Sextus takes care to denounce and correct.[39] But, as I said above, Sextus does not

[37] And not, narrowly, of the Sceptic's mind.

[38] I agree with Corti when he says that where Sextus speaks of self-cancellation in relation to οὐδὲν μᾶλλον, this φωνή should somehow stand for a universal dogmatic statement. But while the statement (S2) for which οὐδὲν μᾶλλον stands here according to Corti is dogmatic in so far as it is universal (and thus speaking also of the future πάθη of the Sceptic), the possible misinterpretation $\neg M^*$ which I have tried to reconstruct would be dogmatic not because of its higher generality, i.e. because of the *number* of things it speaks about, but because of the *kind* of things it speaks about (I refer here to the πάθη as to 'things' loosely, with full awareness that 'affections are not internal "objects" or constituents of an inner world, analogous to but set apart from their authentic counterparts in an outer world' (C. L. Stough, 'Sextus Empiricus on Non-assertion', *Phronesis*, 29 (1984), 137–64 at 143). As I shall clarify below, the distinction 'marks off categories of *speech* rather than kinds of things').

[39] This kind of accuracy in explaining the real meaning of the Sceptical φωναί (or, better, the meaning they have *for the Sceptic*) is not unique in Sextus' work. The whole section of *PH* concerning the φωναί is explicitly meant by Sextus as a way of making clear 'in what sense we [the Sceptics] understand the Sceptical utterances' (*PH* 1. 5). In that section we find a few passages in which Sextus warns his reader about misinterpretations of the φωναί, and which provide, I believe, a strong validation for my conjecture regarding the meaning of 'to posit οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real': 'We use "I suspend judgement" [ἐπέχω] for "I cannot say which of the things proposed I should believe and which I should not believe", making clear that the matters appear to us equal [ἴσα ἡμῖν φαίνεται] in respect of persuasiveness and lack of persuasiveness. Whether they *are* equal [ἴσα ἐστίν], *we do not affirm definitely* [οὐ διαβεβαιούμεθα]: we say what appears to us about them, when this appearance affects us' (*PH* 1. 196); 'Hence it is clear that *we do not use* "Non-assertion" [ἀφασία] to mean that objects are *in their nature* [πρὸς τὴν φύσιν] such as to move absolutely

confine himself to *claiming that* the Pyrrhonist does not posit οὐδὲν μᾶλλον in a dogmatic way; he also *argues why* he does not do so. I interpret this argument as a dialectical move adopted against the most obstinate dogmatic adversaries, who might refuse to listen to the Sceptic's account of the nature of his utterances, or reject it as delusive, and claim that the Sceptical φωναί are phrases the Sceptic asserts *just because* he *believes* that they truly describe some feature of reality which he is eager to inform his audience of.

Let us follow Sextus' refined defensive mechanism step by step. (1) Suppose that the Pyrrhonist really posits οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real, as the dogmatist complains. This would mean that the Pyrrhonist is implicitly asserting a maxim like $\neg M^*$, and this would reveal that (2) he gives his assent to $\neg M^*$ (assuming that his assertion is genuine, neither ironical nor insincere). But since $\neg M^*$ states something ἄδηλον, (3) to assent to it means to dogmatize (by the definition of δογματίζειν); under assumption (1), the dogmatist's charge looks well grounded. But the dogmatist—Sextus would reply—has told only half of the story. (4) *Just because* οὐδὲν μᾶλλον, when posited as absolutely real, stands for an ἄδηλον thesis, it falls into its own scope and is *self-referring* (remember that the domain of p and q is constituted by all τὰ ἄδηλα, and only by them). And since it is self-referring, (5) whoever posits οὐδὲν μᾶλλον as absolutely real

[πάντως] to non-assertion, but to make it clear that now, when we utter it, we are experiencing this affection with regard to the particular matters under investigation' (*PH* 1. 193). See also *PH* 1. 197, 200, 203. There is a further interesting passage suggesting that for Sextus misinterpreting the way in which the Sceptics utter οὐδὲν μᾶλλον is something the dogmatists are strongly exposed to. We are almost at the end of *Against the Grammarians*: Sextus writes that, besides not understanding things, the grammarians do not understand words, for it is not by τέχνη, as they pretend, but by hearing it from the speakers (or writers) themselves that one can learn the meaning of words: 'Or how will they [the grammarians] understand which force οὐδὲν μᾶλλον has among the Sceptics, whether it is interrogative or declarative, and for what it is used, whether for the external object or for our πάθη?' (*M.* 1. 315). It is not by pondering thousands of times the formula 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον' in the light of your dogmatic theories that you will grasp the meaning it has for the Sceptic; you need to ask him directly, otherwise you run the risk of misunderstanding this *vox* as a formula concerning the external world rather than the Sceptic's πάθη.

As to the question whether it is interrogative or declarative, we know from *PH* 1. 191 that the Sceptics adopt 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον' indifferently (ἀδιαφόρως) and loosely (καταχρηστικῶς), either for a πύσμα or for an ἀξίωμα (expressing, however, a mere ἄγνοια and not a συγκατάθεσις). We know also from *PH* 1. 189 that some Sceptics expressly adopt the interrogative form 'τὶ μᾶλλον τόδε ἢ τόδε;' Sextus admits that the declarative form of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον can be a source of misunderstanding: 'Thus, although οὐδὲν μᾶλλον exhibits the character of assent or denial, we do not use it in this way' (*PH* 1. 191).

cannot help conceding that it itself is *οὐ μᾶλλον* than its opposite (not-*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*). But this implies (6) admitting that the reasons for believing $\neg M^*$ are truly as strong (or as weak) as the reasons for believing $\neg(\neg M^*)$, and that therefore it is necessary to suspend judgement about the truth of $\neg M^*$ (to believe the dogmatic maxim $\neg M^*$, rather than its contradictory, would be completely groundless). (7) The Sceptic has finally to admit that he himself cannot believe *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* (i.e. he cannot assent to it as to a slogan truly descriptive of reality). (8) *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* has cancelled itself from the set of the theses the Sceptic considers as possible objects of belief, and so, *a fortiori*, from the set of *his* beliefs.

Now we know *why* the Sceptic does not posit *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* as absolutely real (i.e. does not assert nor believe any dogmatic maxim like $\neg M^*$): he fully realizes that $\neg M^*$ has such a logical form that, *were it true*, one could not *believe* it, and therefore he is aware that there is no reason for asserting $\neg M^*$ (if an assertion is to be—as it normally is—a way of manifesting your *belief* that something is *true*). But even if someone, being unaware of this character of $\neg M^*$, asserted it (showing he believed it), it would be easy in the dialectical game to make him realize the necessity, given his very belief, of suspending judgement about the truth of $\neg M^*$ (and of all the other unclear issues), and thus somehow withdrawing his assertion and cancelling his belief.[40] The outcome would be a mental condition of *ἐποχή* on all dogmatic matters, a condition which could itself be recorded by uttering certain *voces*: the *assertion* of the dogmatic maxims would immediately turn into the *utterance* of non-compromising avowals, belief into suspension of judgement.

[40] $\neg M^*$ has a striking resemblance to those propositions that in Mackie's analysis are labelled as '*operationally* self-refuting': 'anyone who asserts that he believes nothing implicitly commits himself to asserting that he believes that he believes nothing, and hence to denying his original assertion, to admitting that there is something he believes. Thus "I believe nothing" would be another item which could not be coherently asserted, though there is a clear sense in which it could be true' ('Self-refutation', 57). There is an important reason, however, for which I believe that the self-cancellation of *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*, as Sextus depicts it, cannot be catalogued as an instance of operational self-refutation. Sextus *does not* argue that the Pyrrhonist does not assert $\neg M^*$ to avoid that what is normally implied by the act of making an assertion should falsify the assertion itself. It could be said that in his account it is the assertive force (and the belief it implies) that gets the worst of it, being cancelled by the content of $\neg M^*$. Furthermore, for Sextus the act of asserting *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* as real, rather than being logically incoherent, is a loser from a dialectical point of view: if you assert $\neg M^*$, anyone will be able to defeat you and force you into revoking your assertion.

The dogmatist's charge has been brilliantly faced by Sextus' περιγραφή argument.[41]

This does not happen, *pace* McPherran, in virtue of the alleged absolute self-refutation (and thus *falsity*) of οὐδὲν μᾶλλον; οὐδὲν μᾶλλον is *here* self-referring, exactly like 'Everything is false', but its self-application does not (and could not) conduce to a self-refutation.[42] We can still speak of a form of 'cancellation', as I have done so far, but it is not the cancellation of something that was believed true and is proved instead to be false. 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον cancels itself' simply means that, if you have assumed its truth, it immediately excludes itself from the range of the possible objects of belief (you must admit there is no ground to assent to it), and, *a fortiori*, from the body of your beliefs. Here the parallelism with 'Everything is false' ends: 'Everything is false' is self-referring and by applying to itself it is self-refuting as well;

[41] This interpretation of Sextus' argument has been inspired by Corti's interpretation of *PH* 1. 14–15 (*Scale pirroniane*, 111–21). Corti believes that Sextus, by saying that 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον . . . ἑαυτὴν συμπεριγράφει', wants to say that 'οὐδὲν μᾶλλον', used as the dogmatic statement (S2) $\forall pq\neg Mpq$, is such that, if someone posits it as true, we can infer that he does not believe the content of any dogmatic statement, and of (S2) in particular. In detail: if someone posits (S2) as true, we can infer by the elimination of the universal that every expression is not μᾶλλον than its antithetical expression, and so that (S2) is not μᾶλλον than ¬(S2). Because of the meaning of the 'μᾶλλον' predicate, it follows that he who posits (S2) does not believe the content of any dogmatic sentence, and of (S2) in particular.

According to Corti, by pointing out this self-*refuting* character of (S2) Sextus is attempting 'to *defend* the possibility for the Sceptic to believe that (S2)' as a fundamental (even if provisional) predictive principle of his ἀγωγή (pp. 130–6). I, on the contrary, have placed Sextus' argument in a dialectical context, and have tried to show that Sextus is actually *denying* the very possibility for the Sceptic to believe $\neg M^*$ (for the substantial difference between Corti's (S2) and my $\neg M^*$ see above, n. 38).

[42] As hinted above, the only way in which οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον could be thought to be absolutely self-refuting (i.e. falsified by its own content) is by misunderstanding its deep grammar. If one analysed it as 'For every pair of conflicting dogmatic matters p and q, it is not true that p and not true that q', from assuming the truth of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον we would obtain that neither οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον nor not-οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον is true, and hence that οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον is not true. But it is absolutely manifest that Sextus does not use οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον with this meaning. Here is a passage, for example, in which Sextus explicitly rejects something similar to the analysis above as the correct paraphrase of the Sceptical οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον, and suggests that it expresses the 'anairetic' use the Democriteans make of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον: 'But the Sceptics and the Democriteans use the φωνή "No more" in different senses; for the latter assign it the sense that neither is the case, we the sense that we do not know whether some of the appearances is both or neither' (*PH* 1. 213). On 'thetic' and 'anairetic' use of οὐ(δὲν) μᾶλλον see in particular D.L. 9. 75.

in the case of *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* self-reference and self-refutation do not coincide.[43]

I earlier promised to suggest a translation more accurate than 'to cancel (along with)' for the Greek verb *(συμ)περιγράφειν* in our passages. Having cleared up the argumentative role of *(συμ)περιγράφειν*, I can now keep my promise. In 1.3 I wrote that 'to cancel' is one of the possible meanings the verb *περιγράφειν* has in ancient Greek. It is important to specify now that *περιγράφειν* could denote, presumably starting from the first century AD, a very specific kind of cancellation: that kind of cancellation practised by copyists, correctors, and philologists on a text that we call 'expunction' or 'deletion'. While in our modern editions we find square brackets to indicate the expunctions made by editors, the ancients used different diacritical marks to expunge:

> a sponge may be used to delete a whole word or a line (or more). *Deletions* may be *indicated by enclosing a passage in round brackets* (the *technical term is περιγράφειν*) [*περιγραφαί* are the expunging round brackets]; by cancelling a letter or letters by means of a stroke drawn horizontally or obliquely through them [*διαγράφειν*]; by placing a dot ('expunging dot') or a line above, or above and below, or to either side; or by a combination of these methods.[44]

I suggest that what Sextus has in his mind when he uses the compound *συμπεριγράφειν* is just the technical meaning that *περιγράφειν* has among copyists and philologists of his time, and not simply a broad concept of cancellation.[45] I think also that to translate *συμπεριγράφειν* as 'to bracket along with' is not merely an exegetical

[43] This asymmetry seemingly represents a problem for the interpretation I have just proposed, but if we read the passage above more carefully we shall discern that the stress there is not on the self-refuting character of 'Everything is false', but simply on its self-reference; *πάντα ἐστὶ ψευδῆ* merely *says* (*λέγει*) that it itself, as well as all the other things, is false. That this saying constitutes at the same time a self-refutation does not seem to be what Sextus really cares about *here* (and in fact he does not claim *here* that *πάντα ἐστὶ ψευδῆ* is subject to *περιτροπή*).

[44] E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1971), 18. The first instance of *περιγράφειν* with the sense of 'to expunge' appears in *P.Oxy.* 24. 2387, fr. 1: in a note (datable back to the 1st cent. AD) written in the top margin of a papyrus containing Alcman's lyrics we read 'the text *περιεγέγρα(πτο)* in Aristonicus' copy, whereas it was *ἀπερίγρα(πτος)* in Ptolemy's one'.

[45] For this idea I thank Walter Cavini, who suggested this possibility to me in a private conversation. Sextus' use of *(συμ)περιγράφειν* with such a nuance is not odd, since in Greek literature there are a few other texts in which the philological meaning is echoed (e.g. Plut. *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* 334 C 5–8; Athen. 5. 9; Origen, *In Evang. Ioann.* 10. 6; Apoll. Dysc. *Synt.* 6. 3).

subtlety, but that in some measure it will help us in correctly understanding the arguments in which the verb appears. The application of the image of bracketing, for example, fits very well the passage I analysed above; *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*, when taken as a true maxim, does not cancel the dogmatic beliefs (and itself) in the sense that it completely erases (or wants to erase) one person's mind contents. *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* brackets (i.e. expunges) the dogmatic contents: it says that those contents, being groundless, should no longer be believed to be true, and that they are now to be contemplated in a different light, i.e. with the Sceptical disposition of suspending one's judgement about the objective reality of what they represent. It does not say that our minds are to be empty minds, *tabulae rasae*; what is to be emptied in our minds is the set of the dogmatic theses we take to be true, or, stressing a bit more the analogy with philological practice, the whole 'sections' containing those beliefs have to be bracketed.

Up to this point I have laid a marked stress on the fact that, while self-refuted theses are falsified, self-bracketing does not end with a falsification of the thesis involved. There is actually a more basic difference at the bottom of this distinction. As we have seen, in Sextus *περιτροπή* consists in a reversal whereby advancing a proposal commits one to its contradictory opposite; the distinctive mark of *περιτροπή* is that at the end of the dialectical game there is something one is committed to (the contradictory $\neg p$ of one's proposal p), a 'residue product' of *περιτροπή*.

At the end of the *περιγραφή* argument, on the contrary, we have no such residue: according to Sextus, one who has advanced *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* as a dogmatic maxim is not committed to the truth of its contradictory (some dogmatic theses are more persuasive than their opposite, and therefore one has grounds to believe them). As seen above, he will be forced only into admitting the necessity of not-believing *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*; but not-believing *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* is not tantamount to (nor does it imply) believing not-*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*. At the end of the day, he is not committed to believing anything (he suspends judgement): his initial proposal, and the connected belief, have been bracketed, without being replaced by alternative proposals or beliefs.

I think that Sextus' *conscious* usage of the different terms *περιτρέπειν* (*περιτροπή*) and (*συμ*)*περιγράφειν* does perfectly mirror this distinction in the inner logic of the arguments. It is indisputable that *περιτρέπειν* and *περιτροπή* were almost terms of art at Sextus'

time; nevertheless, their original meaning could not but sound clear to the ears of any Greek speaker. *περιτροπή* is a reversal, a turning round: if you are walking and suddenly turn round, you are no longer walking towards your previous destination, but there is still some place towards which you are directing your steps. If there is in front of you the white face of a cube and then you turn the cube, you will no longer be able to see *that* face, but this does not mean that you will no longer see anything at all; you will find in front of you the opposite black face. The philological metaphor of bracketing, on the other hand, fits very well the distinctive feature of the *περιγραφή* argument: the act of putting a text within round brackets indicates that you reject it as spurious, but by this very act you are not replacing the expunged words with any alternative text.[46]

According to my interpretation, therefore, it is not only by means of the three well-known similes of fire, purgatives, and a ladder that Sextus attempts to clarify the logical nature of a particular argument which *is not*, as McPherran and most scholars believe, a self-refutation (*περιτροπή*); in the formulation of the *περιγραφή* argument a charming philological metaphor is hidden in the very choice of the verb *συμπεριγράφειν*.

The overall reading I have proposed hitherto receives, I believe, strong support from the following passage:

> Thus, if one who holds beliefs posits as real what he believes, while the Sceptic utters his own *φωναί* in such a way that potentially [*δυνάμει*] they are bracketed by themselves [*ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν περιγράφεσθαι*], then he cannot be said to hold beliefs in uttering them. (*PH* 1. 15)

The Sceptical *φωναί* have such a nature that they are *potentially* self-bracketing, i.e. *if taken as true dogmatic maxims* they are self-referring and say of themselves what they say of the other unclear things (roughly, that they cannot be believed). They are, we could say, 'self-bracketing brackets'. Thus the dogmatist can no longer protest that the Sceptic betrays that he holds beliefs when he utters his *φωναί*. Logic itself prevents the Sceptical *φωναί* from being *believed* as true assertions about reality, *and the Pyrrhonist is fully aware of that*;[47] the necessary conclusion is that it is not only *de*

[46] Of course, one can *also* replace the expunged text with an alternative one, but this replacement is by no means *part* of the previous act of bracketing.

[47] That in no way means that the Sceptical *φωναί*, when dogmatically taken, are logically *false* (for example, nothing prevents $\neg M^*$ from being true).

facto false, but *cannot* be true, that the Pyrrhonist dogmatizes in uttering his *φωναί*.

2.4. *The Pyrrhonist's actual attitude towards his φωναί*

Having shown the logical impossibility of the dogmatist's charge, Sextus can now present what he takes to be the *main point* (*τὸ μέγιστον*) of his defence, i.e. the explanation of the actual significance of the Sceptical *φωναί*:

> In uttering these *φωναί* he [the Sceptic] says what appears to him [*τὸ ἑαυτῷ φαινόμενον*] and announces his affection without holding beliefs [*τὸ πάθος ἀπαγγέλλει τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἀδοξάστως*], affirming [*διαβεβαιούμενος*] nothing about the external objects [*περὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν ὑποκειμένων*]. (*PH* 1. 15)

The Sceptic's *φωναί* are only avowals (*ἀπαγγελίαι*)[48] of his own *πάθη* and do not imply the belief that what appears to him is absolutely real, or has any correspondence with unclear external states of affairs. The *φωναί* voice the way the Sceptic is mentally affected in examining those unclear matters that the dogmatists investigate and posit as real,[49] but these *πάθη* themselves *are not* anything unclear, and it is not by avowing them that one could be guilty of dogmatism. As Jonathan Barnes has pointed out, the Pyrrhonian utterances are 'speech acts of a different kind from statements and affirmations';[50] they express *πάθη*, and do not describe or state anything at all, bypassing belief. 'Honey is sweet' states something *ἄδηλον*, which can be the object of dogmatic belief; 'Honey appears sweet to me now' is a mere confession of the Pyrrhonist's mental disposition, of his present acquiescence in an involuntary *πάθος*; it is not supposed to describe any feature of reality. 'Honey is sweet no more than it is bitter' is itself to be taken as the mere avowal of a *πάθος* the Pyrrhonist is experiencing (the *πάθος* of being unable to decide whether honey is sweet or bitter): a *πάθος* generated by his

[48] For the use of *ἀπαγγέλλειν*, *ἀπαγγελίαι*, *ἀπαγγελτικῶς* in relation to the Sceptical utterances see *PH* 1. 4, 15, 197, 200 (*bis*), 203. For Sextus' use of the adjective *δηλωτικός* in relation to the Sceptical *φωναί* see *PH* 1. 195, 197, 201. For the term *ἐξομολογήσεις* ('confessions'), see D.L. 9. 104.

[49] See *PH* 1. 187: 'When we use one of these modes or one of the modes of suspension of judgement, we utter certain *φωναί* which manifest [*μηνυτικάς*] a Sceptical disposition and our *πάθη*.'

[50] J. Barnes, 'The Beliefs of a Pyrrhonist', *Elenchos*, 4 (1983), 5–43 at 14 (particularly incisive is Barnes's comparison between the Pyrrhonian *ἀπαγγελίαι* and Wittgenstein's *Äußerungen*).

investigation *about* unclear matters, but still a *πάθος*. The Pyrrhonist is expressing something about himself (how *he* is affected *now*), and he is not describing as real any obscure feature of the external world (that honey *is* sweet and bitter,[51] or that it *is* neither sweet nor bitter,[52] or that reality has such intrinsic indeterminacy, or human mind such an intrinsic weakness, that it *is* actually impossible to decide whether honey is sweet or bitter).[53]

The Sceptical *φωναί*, whose utterance appears prima facie to compromise the Pyrrhonian project of avoiding dogmatism and living *ἀδοξάστως*, turn out at the end of the day to be absolutely innocuous: they are merely the linguistic expression of that kind of 'good' *δογματίζειν* the Pyrrhonist has no worries about admitting and even endorsing.[54] Their status does not differ from that of any first-order Sceptical utterance; a status which Sextus takes care to elucidate from the very opening of his work, through the following crucial caveat:

> Of the Sceptic way we shall give now an outline, first premising that on *none* of the matters to be discussed do we affirm [*διαβεβαιούμεθα*] that things absolutely [*πάντως*] are just as we say, but on *each* matter we report as a chronicler [*ἱστορικῶς ἀπαγγέλλομεν*] what appears to us at the time [*τὸ νῦν φαινόμενον ἡμῖν*]. (*PH* 1. 4)

Any plausible doubt about that has been banished by Sextus through his refined *περιγραφή* argument. Suppose the dogmatist stubbornly refuses to believe in the earnestness of the Pyrrhonist's account, and continues to charge that the Sceptical *φωναί* are not plain first-person *ἀπαγγελίαι*, but much more pretentious claims about the world, and that the Sceptic is therefore only a disguised negative dogmatist; this dogmatist will have finally

[51] This would be the 'thetic' (and probably Protagorean) use of *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* (see D.L. 9. 75).

[52] This would be the 'anairetic' use of *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* made by the Democriteans (see n. 42).

[53] Exactly the same holds for the *φωνὴ* '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*' (standing elliptically for the *avowal* $\neg M$, and not for the dogmatic *assertion* $\neg M$*).

[54] Burnyeat believes that at times the very idea of a non-epistemic, phenomenological reading of the verb *φαίνεται* is a bluff on Sextus' part ('Protagoras', 50). According to this view, 'for every pair of conflicting unclear matters p and q I have examined, it appears to me now that p is as persuasive as q' cannot but mean '*I am inclined to believe* (or I weakly believe) now that, for every pair of conflicting unclear matters p and q I have examined, p *is* as persuasive as q' and thus commits the Sceptic to having a belief. This challenge, however, is too deep and crucial to be taken into account in the present discussion.

to be silent, faced with the irresistible force of logic and argument.

2.5. PH *1. 206: the simile of purgatives*

We now proceed to the second passage (*PH* 1. 206), to see whether it can provide a validation of my reading of *PH* 1. 13–15:

> Of all the Sceptical *φωναί*, one should understand first of all that we [the Sceptics] do not affirm definitely [*οὐ διαβεβαιούμεθα*] that they are absolutely [*πάντως*] true, since we say that they *can* [*δύνασθαι*] do away with [*ἀναιρεῖσθαι*] themselves, bracketing themselves along with [*συμπεριγραφομένας*] what they are said of, just as purgative drugs do not merely drain the humours from the body but drive themselves out too along with the humours. (*PH* 1. 206)

The first part of the passage quoted above seems almost an abstract of what we have read and commented on in the previous section; and *δύνασθαι*, I think, is one of the most crucial exegetical clues, by reminding us of *δυνάμει* at *PH* 1. 15. The Sceptical *φωναί* are not self-bracketing *tout court*, but they are such potentially, *only if* advanced (or interpreted) as *πάντως ἀληθεῖς*; in this case (and only in this case) they do away with themselves.

The verb 'to do away with' (*ἀναιρεῖσθαι*) has to be taken here as broadly as possible. There are many ways in which things can do away with other things (or themselves), these different ways depending, to begin with, on the very nature of the things involved in the elimination. For example, one can do away with a word from a text by erasing it, by drawing a stroke horizontally through it, or, more gently, by putting it within round (or square) brackets; merely saying that one has done away with a word leaves unprejudiced how one did so. 'The Sceptical *φωναί* (when posited as true maxims) do away with themselves'; one could reasonably ask: 'How?' They could do so, for example, by being reversed into their contradictory and thus confessing that they are indeed false (by refuting themselves), or by saying that actually they are worthy of being believed no more than their opposites (by bracketing themselves). In our case we do not need to ask, because Sextus has anticipated our question: the *φωναί* do away with themselves *by bracketing* themselves (along with what they are applied to).[55] *ἀναιρεῖν* is the *genus*, *περιτρέπειν* and *(συμ)περιγράφειν* the *species*.

[55] The exact meaning of 'self-bracketing' is context-sensitive, according to the

In the second part of the passage a simile is introduced which we have not met before, and which appears to substitute for the analogy—absent here—with 'Everything is false' of *PH* 1. 14. I judge the simile of purgatives much more enlightening than that analogy, which could actually be a source of the misunderstanding of that passage, by apparently bringing into the picture the concepts of falsehood and absolute self-refutation.

Here is how the simile works in the case of *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*. Suppose—Sextus would say—that the Sceptic really posits it as true, as the dogmatist complains; *in this case*, *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* would behave like purgatives: the Sceptic has 'introduced' *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* into his mind, among the other beliefs he is committed to, like someone introducing purgatives into his body, among the harmful humours. *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* puts within brackets the Pyrrhonist's beliefs, saying that there is no real reason to believe them (not because they are false, but because they are equipollent with their opposites). In the same way, the purgatives act on the humours and expel them outside the body (the purging of the humours from the body is the counterpart of the bracketing of beliefs in the mind). But when *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* says that all the beliefs in our minds are actually unbelievable, it is making this very claim also about itself, being itself *ex hypothesi* a dogmatic belief (so the dogmatist charges), and brackets itself too. Accordingly, the purgatives expel themselves along with the harmful humours (they themselves would act as harmful agents if retained in the body). The parallelism is once more complete: also *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*, if retained in the mind *as a belief* (unbracketed), would harmfully undermine the Sceptic's lack of beliefs and his *ἀταραξία*. The simile of purgatives, like the philological metaphor, provides a vivid image of the distinctive feature of Sextus' *περιγραφή*: at the end of the day, no dangerous residue remains in the Pyrrhonist's mind, even under the dangerous (and actually false) assumption that the Sceptic dogmatically posits *οὐδὲν μᾶλλον*.

But again, and more important, the Sceptic by no means intends to advance true maxims when he utters his *φωναί*: '[In uttering our *φωναί*] we say what appears to us [*τὸ φαινόμενον ἡμῖν*] and do not

different *φωναί*. For example, 'Everything is undetermined' (*πάντα ἐστὶν ἀόριστα*) brackets itself *when dogmatically posited as determined*, in the sense that it says that it itself too is *not determined*, and hence expunges itself from the set of the allegedly determined things. This example makes it clear, once more, that the potential self-application of the *φωναί* is not a self-*falsification*.

make firm assertions [διαβεβαιωτικῶς] about the nature of external things' (*PH* 1. 208).

2.6. *Interim conclusions*

We can now sum up the main points about the role of the περιγραφή argument in Sextus' treatment of the φωναί:

(1) When the Pyrrhonist utters his φωναί, he is merely *avowing* his own πάθη. He is not *asserting* anything about unclear matters of fact in the external world.

(2) The dogmatist could reject this account as delusive: the Pyrrhonist, in uttering his φωναί, is not merely voicing his mental affections about unclear issues, but is dogmatizing, by positing unclear matters as true through second-order maxims. So, the Pyrrhonist too, at the end of the day, holds beliefs.

(3) The Pyrrhonist replies that, *if dogmatically taken*, his φωναί are self-referring and thus self-bracketing; they say of themselves what they say of all the other ἄδηλα, that there is no reason to believe them rather than their opposites (which induces suspension of judgement). Once one has realized this (as the Sceptic has), he no longer considers the φωναί as possible objects of dogmatic belief, and *a fortiori* he does not believe them, or advance them as true: the dogmatist's charge is groundless. None the less, even if the Sceptic believed that his φωναί express true maxims about reality, this belief would necessarily induce in him a generalized condition of suspension of judgement about the truth of any dogmatic thesis, these maxims not excepted. But if also the assertion of the dogmatic maxims would turn into the utterance of non-compromising avowals, the dogmatist cannot but finally accept as sincere the Pyrrhonist's account of his attitude towards his φωναί (because it is finally the only possible one).

My interpretation has ruled out the concept of self-refutation, in all the nuances distinguished by modern logicians, from the two passages containing the alleged Sceptical acceptance of self-refutation; I have tried to point out that there are compelling reasons for doing so, from both a terminological and a philosophical point of view.

The concept of self-refutation has been replaced with that of 'self-bracketing'. Self-bracketing too is not a property to be attributed to the φωναί *tout court*: they would be self-bracketing *only if* advanced

with a dogmatic attitude. The Sceptical *φωναί* as the Sceptic utters them are neither self-refuting nor self-bracketing; all this subtle talk about that particular form of self-elimination is made possible (and necessary) only by the dialectical context which I sketched at the beginning of this section. The self-bracketing of the Sceptical *φωναί* is a complex defence mechanism which Sextus adopts against the charge of disguised dogmatism (and more specifically, as seen above at point (2), against the most relentless supporters of that charge). In the actual use which the Sceptic makes of them, his *φωναί* are not self-bracketing, because they are not self-referring either; since Sextus explicitly says that they are adopted *only* about unclear things, to be self-referring they themselves should be considered *ἄδηλα* (truth-claims about certain states of affairs). But Sextus, time and again, claims that they are plain utterances voicing the Sceptic's *πάθη*, and that this is the *main reason* (*τὸ μέγιστον*) why the Sceptic is not guilty of dogmatism when he utters them.[56]

Suppose now, *λόγου χάριν*, that self-bracketing were to be considered instead a mechanism really at work whenever the Sceptic utters his *φωναί*; Sextus' reply to the dogmatist's charge would be pretty odd: 'I (that very Sceptic who is always announcing that I live *ἀδοξάστως*) wish to believe my *φωναί*, but I cannot: every time I try to assert them dogmatically, unfortunately they bracket themselves. So, don't accuse me of holding beliefs!'

[56] *Contra* Burnyeat ('Can the Sceptic Live his Scepticism?', in J. Barnes, M. Burnyeat, and M. Schofield (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism* (Oxford, 1980), 20–53 at 50 n. 52): 'Notice that it is for these higher-level generalizations [the *φωναί*] that Sextus invokes the defence of cheerful self-refutation . . . Self-*refutation* presupposes that the propositions do make a truth-claim. Sextus would not need (and *could* not use) the defence if the generalizations were *really* the expressions of appearance which he *simultaneously* claims them to be.' For the above-mentioned reasons, I think that Burnyeat is mistaken when he speaks of self-refutation here; it is true, however, that my self-bracketing also 'presupposes that the propositions do make a truth-claim'. It is true also that to take the *φωναί* as making truth-claims is inconsistent with Sextus' account of them as mere avowals of affections; but Burnyeat is wrong in considering the two accounts simultaneous, and therefore discarding the second one as untenable and—as his 'really' suggests—*insincere* (see above, n. 54). *Only* the second account expresses the Pyrrhonist's actual attitude towards his *φωναί*; the first one (based on self-bracketing) is assumed by Sextus *only dialectically* and counterfactually to argue against the charge of dogmatism by providing a logical vindication for the truthfulness of the second account itself. The same misleading failure to understand the different status of the two accounts is apparent also in Stough's words: 'The Skeptic doctrine is indeed self-refuting, but only after it has destroyed all the arguments of traditional philosophy. [Note:] *Another way* of meeting this type of objection was to remind the critic that Skeptic utterances are no more than reports of their own experiences' (*Greek Skepticism*, 146).

The Sceptic would be no longer a *disguised* negative dogmatist; he would be a *bankrupt* negative dogmatist.

3. The self-bracketing of the proof against proof (*M.* 8. 463–481, *PH* 2. 185–188)

In this section I shall show how an analysis parallel to that of *PH* 1. 13–15 and 1. 206–8 can satisfactorily be applied also to the two sections regarding the (alleged) acceptance of the self-refutation of the proof against proof.[57] As I pointed out in the first section, the key word of these passages, *συμπεριγράφειν*, is the same as we found in the two passages about the *φωναί*; I hope it will be clear at the end of our reading that this is not mere chance.

But the first point of contact between the two pairs of passages is that both of them can be properly analysed and understood only within the broad dialectical context in which Sextus locates them. I start then with an outline of this context.

3.1. *The dogmatist's dilemma and the charge of self-refutation*

We are almost at the end of the second book of *Against the Logicians*; Sextus has just presented a series of arguments against the existence of proof (*ἀπόδειξις*);[58] now (*M.* 8. 463) he invites his readers to have a look also at the opposite argument (presumably, an argument in support of the existence of proof):

The dogmatic philosophers think that one who maintains that proof does

[57] I shall not analyse the two passages about the PAP in sequence, as I did in sect. 2; I shall focus on the final passage of *Against the Logicians* (*M.* 8. 463–81) that offers a much more extensive and detailed account of the problem than *PH* 2. 185–8, and I shall point out only the most significant correspondences and differences between the two passages.

[58] I am not dealing here with the arguments against proof (on which see J. Barnes, 'Proof Destroyed', in Barnes, Burnyeat, and Schofield (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism*, 161–81); my analysis will focus only on the metalogical matters raised by the use the Pyrrhonist makes of them.

For the dogmatic definition of that *ἀπόδειξις* whose existence Sextus criticizes see e.g. *PH* 2. 143: 'A proof, then, ought to be an argument [*λόγος*], which is conclusive [*συνακτικός*] and true [*ἀληθής*] and has an unclear [*ἄδηλον*] conclusion [*συμπέρασμα*] which is revealed by the power of the premisses [*λήμματα*]; and for this reason a proof is said to be an argument which, by way of agreed premisses and in virtue of inference, reveals an unclear conclusion [*ἐπιφορά*].'

For the Stoic definitions of *ἀπόδειξις* see J. Brunschwig, 'Proof Defined', in Barnes, Burnyeat, and Schofield (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism*, 125–60.

not exist is *refuted by himself* [*αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ περιτρέπεσθαι*], and that he affirms proof by the very means by which he denies it. (*M.* 8. 463)[59]

We have come across the concept of self-refutation that was absent from the passages analysed in Section 2: self-refutation is presented as the *charge* the dogmatist moves against whoever maintains by argument that proof does not exist.

In withstanding the Pyrrhonists, the dogmatists submit to them a dilemma: he who says that proof does not exist does so either by using a bare and unproved assertion (*ψιλῇ καὶ ἀναποδείκτῳ φάσει*) or by proving it by argument (*M.* 8. 463). If the denier of the existence of proof falls under the first horn of the dilemma, he will not be credible (or, better, he will be no more credible than those who merely assert that proof exists).

> But if it is by proving the non-existence of proof . . . he has thereby admitted that proof exists; for the argument which proves the non-existence of proof is a proof of the existence of proof. (*M.* 8. 464)

It is properly under this second horn of the dilemma that the dogmatist's charge of *περιτροπή* works:

(1) Proof does not exist.
(2) There is a proof for (1).
(3) Proof exists. from (2), *περιτροπή* of (1)

One who states (1), as for example the Pyrrhonist at the end of his arguments against proof, and who does not want to buy into the first horn of the dogmatist's dilemma (admitting that his assertion

[59] I have followed the text established by Kochalsky and Mutschmann (*οἴονται γὰρ οἱ δογματικοὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων τὸν ἀξιοῦντα μὴ εἶναι ἀπόδειξιν αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ περιτρέπεσθαι, καὶ δι' ὧν ἀναιρεῖ ταύτην, διὰ τούτων αὐτὴν ὁρίζειν*), expunging *λόγοι*, that appears after *δογματικοί* in the manuscripts Laurentianus 85, 11 and Parisinus 1964 (the *lectio* of Laurentianus 85, 19 is *λόγου*). Bury adopts the text established by Bekker, with *λόγον* after *φιλοσόφων*, and translates it as 'argument' ('The argument which maintains the non-existence of proof is overthrown by itself'). Burnyeat adopts the same text, but criticizes Bury's translation ('Protagoras', 49 n. 9); his comment is very interesting and anticipates in a certain way some of the central points of my interpretation: 'Bury's "reversal of the argument" is wrong, if not *unmeaning*: what gets reversed is not an argument but a proposition. Again, it should be a *statement* maintaining the nonexistence of proof, not an argument, as Bury's translation has it, that Sextus adduces . . . in connection with the Stoic charge that it is self-refuting (cf. *PH* 2. 179). There is argument about it, which Sextus in the immediate sequel terms *λόγος*, and later he considers whether to admit that this argument does away with itself . . . but for that he *does not use the vocabulary of reversal*.'

is not credible), has to affirm (2); but from (2), (3) follows, i.e. the contradictory of (1). The Pyrrhonist has refuted himself.

We have seen in Section 1 that Burnyeat and McPherran classify the self-refutation of the PAP in the category of 'pragmatic self-refutation'. But it is apparent to me that the *charge* of self-refutation we met here should be catalogued under the label of 'dialectical self-refutation';[60] according to that charge, (3) is not implied by the way the Sceptic utters (1), but by the successive dilemma the dogmatist could always submit to him, that is intended to compel the Sceptic to accept the further premiss (2). (3) follows from (2), and not from *the way* (1) is uttered; and (2) can be provided only within a dialectical framework in which the dogmatist can submit his dilemma. The similarities with Protagoras' self-refutation leap to the eye (see pp. 269–70).

That is how Sextus goes on:

> And, in general, the argument against proof [ὁ κατὰ τῆς ἀποδείξεως λόγος] either is a proof or is not a proof; and if it is not a proof, it is untrustworthy [ἄπιστος], but if it is a proof, proof exists. (*M.* 8. 465)

What at first sight seems to be only a summary of the dogmatist's dilemma, with the charge of self-refutation embedded in the second horn, brings actually something slightly different into the discussion. ὁ κατὰ τῆς ἀποδείξεως λόγος is not the *statement* 'Proof does not exist', but the whole *argument* against the existence of proof (adopting McPherran's acronym, the PAP). The charge of self-refutation thus slips from the conclusion of the PAP (or, more precisely, from whoever states it) to the PAP itself, and there it will remain up to the end of the passage. Here is the analysis of the new argument:

(1) ⟨{*p*, *q*, *r*, ...} ⊢ Proof does not exist.⟩	PAP
(2) (1) is a proof.	
(3) Proof exists.	from (2)

The structure of this self-refutation is virtually the same as that seen above. The Sceptic propounds the PAP, i.e. an ordered set of sentences {*p*, *q*, *r*, ...}, the last of which is the conclusion 'Proof does not exist'. According to the dogmatist's dilemma, he can say that that set of sentences does not constitute a proof (it lacks at least

[60] As regards the Pyrrhonist's *acceptance* of self-refutation, I shall argue below that self-refutation is neither pragmatic nor dialectical, simply because I believe there is actually no accepted self-refutation at all.

one of the characters I listed above at n. 58); in this case, the PAP is not credible (i.e. it does not generate persuasion as to the truth of its conclusion). Alternatively, if the Sceptic says that the PAP is a proof, then (3) follows, and the Sceptic who presumably presented the PAP because committed to the truth of its conclusion ($\neg(3)$), can be considered self-refuted.[61]

Needless to say, the dogmatist's charge of *περιτροπή* against the PAP is supposed to be at the same time the announced argument in favour of the existence of proof: in very rough terms, if one who attempts to deny the existence of proof is forced into admitting it, the existence of proof receives a most convincing backing. Nevertheless, Sextus reports a formal argument for the existence of proof (a form of constructive dilemma):

(1)	If proof exists, proof exists.	$p \rightarrow p$
(2)	If proof does not exist, proof exists.	$\neg p \rightarrow p$
(3)	Either proof exists or does not exist.	$p \vee \neg p$
∴	Proof exists.	p[62]

Sextus' justification for assuming the soundness of (2) is the *περιτροπή* of any attempt to prove the non-existence of proof: 'For the very argument which proves the non-existence of proof, being demonstrative, confirms the existence of proof' (*M.* 8. 467). At face value, (2) is sound only under the very disputable assumption that proof could be non-existent only if *proved* to be so. Sextus, however, does not dwell upon this point; his reply will be directed against the charge of self-refutation itself, and not against its employment as a positive proof of the existence of proof.[63]

[61] The passage in *PH* (2. 185) begins by at once formulating the dilemma and the charge of *περιτροπή* against the PAPs, and not, as seen above, against the statement (or whoever states) 'Proof does not exist': 'The dogmatists, attempting to establish the contrary, say that the arguments propounded against proof are either demonstrative or non-demonstrative; and if they are not demonstrative, then they cannot show that proof does not exist; if they are demonstrative, then they themselves conclude the existence of proof by *περιτροπή*.'

[62] For the justification of the premisses and of the soundness of the argument see *M.* 8. 466–9 and *PH* 2. 186. In *PH* 2. 186 we find a succinct description of the argument in quite formal terms: 'Whatever follows opposites is not only true, but also necessary.'

[63] There is an alternative way to interpret the passage that makes the dogmatist's argument much more plausible:

(1) If the Sceptic says that proof exists, then the Sceptic admits that proof exists.
(2) If the Sceptic says that proof does not exist, then the Sceptic admits that proof exists.

3.2. *The 'returned dilemma'*

The Sceptic's reply consists in putting the burden of the dilemma on the dogmatist who formulated it, embedding it in a second dilemma.

Suppose the dogmatist declares himself unable to answer his own question, i.e. cannot *say* whether the PAP is a proof or not; in this case, he ought to be indulgent towards the Sceptic if he has no answer to such a difficult question, and let him leave the problem unsolved (*M.* 8. 470).

Suppose, on the other hand, that the dogmatist takes up the challenge, deciding to grasp one of the horns of his own dilemma. If the dogmatist answers that the PAP is not a proof, from that it will not be possible to show that proof *does not* exist, nor to affirm that, since the PAP is a proof, proof *does* exist (*M.* 8. 471).[64] If the dogmatist, on the contrary, subscribes to the second horn of his dilemma ('The PAP is a proof'), then he is conceding that the PAP's conclusion ('Proof does not exist') is true (a genuine proof has both premisses and conclusion true), and hence that its contradictory is false. The dogmatist, being eager to show that the PAP is demonstrative, *no more* would affirm than he would deny the existence of proof (*M.* 8. 472).

I disagree here with McPherran's reading of the passage: Sextus is not 'requesting that he [the dogmatist] produce *a non-dilemmatic proof* that the Skeptic's PAP is unsound' ('Homeopathy', 300). Sextus is just asking him to *say* (and not to *prove*) whether the PAP is or is not a proof; he is just proposing the very same dilemma as the dogmatist put to him (as seen above, the dogmatist did not ask

(3) Either the Sceptic says that proof exists or he says that proof does not exist.
∴ The Sceptic admits that proof exists.

(2) is true under the assumption that proof could be *credibly said* to be non-existent only if proved to be so. Such an assumption is certainly question-begging, but less hopeless than 'Proof could be non-existent only if proved to be so'.

[64] Here is the Greek text: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ οὔκ ἐστιν ἀπόδειξις, οὐκ ἐνέσται ἐξ αὐτοῦ διδάσκειν ὅτι οὐκ ἐστιν ἀπόδειξις, οὐδὲ λέγειν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος ἀπόδειξις ὅτι [οὐκ] ἔσται ἡ ἀπόδειξις*. Beginning from Heintz, modern editors deleted both the third and the fourth *οὐκ* in the passage above. I retain the third *οὐκ* for two reasons:

(1) The double expunction makes the clause that follows the third *ὅτι* identical in meaning to that which follows the first one, and such an odd repetition does not make any sense (consider also the use of *οὐδέ*).
(2) As we shall see below, retaining the third *οὐκ* makes the conclusion of the passage parallel to that of the following one.

the Sceptic, with a question-begging move, to prove that the PAP is a proof).

I presume that the rationale for addressing back to the dogmatist his own dilemma is to show him that *neither* of the two horns implies—via περιτροπή—the existence of proof. If the dogmatist says that the Sceptical PAP is not a proof, clearly nothing will follow, neither that proof does not exist nor that proof exists: we have no self-refutation.[65] If the dogmatist answers the Sceptic 'Well, your PAP *is* a proof', hoping by that to show that the Sceptic in propounding it has involuntarily admitted that (at least one) proof does exist, this hope will soon be disappointed. If the PAP is a proof, then its conclusion ('Proof does not exist') is true, and so it is false that proof exists. The dogmatist, by subscribing to the second horn of his dilemma, would no more affirm the existence of proof (there is at least one proof, the PAP) than he would deny it (as the PAP concludes, proof does not exist), obtaining the same result as he would reach by grasping the first horn: a perfect equipollence between opposite theses.[66] Thus, no confirmation of the existence of proof comes to the dogmatist from the mere fact that the Sceptic has presented his PAP.[67]

3.3. *The Pyrrhonist's actual attitude towards his λόγοι*

But now that the dogmatist has answered his own dilemma, he could refuse to be indulgent with the Pyrrhonist and reclaim an answer from him. In this case, Sextus writes, the Pyrrhonist will give a 'safe' answer:

> For they [the Pyrrhonists] will say that the argument against proof is merely *persuasive* [πιθανόν] and that at the moment [πρὸς τὸ παρόν] it persuades them [πείθειν αὐτούς] and draws them to assent [ἐπάγεσθαι συγκατάθεσιν], but that they do not know whether it will still do so later on because of the variableness of the human mind. (*M.* 8. 473)

[65] It is worth noticing how such comment by Sextus would be quite perverse from an argumentative point of view if we understood, after McPherran, 'says' as 'proves'; if the dogmatist manages to *prove* that the PAP is not demonstrative, then he has also shown that proof does indeed exist.

[66] In one case the two theses ('Proof exists' and 'Proof does not exist') are equipollent because *neither* of them follows from the assumption ('The PAP is not a proof'); in the other one, because *both* of them follow from the same assumption ('The PAP is a proof').

[67] All this section about the 'returned dilemma' is completely absent from *PH* 2. 185–8.

According to Sextus, this answer is safe for two reasons:

(1) even if the dogmatist can prove that the argument against proof is not true (and hence is not a proof),[68] he will not be in conflict with the Pyrrhonist, who does not definitely affirm (διαβεβαιοῦσθαι) of this argument that it is true, but only that it is persuasive for him (*M.* 8. 474);

(2) if the dogmatist attempts to overthrow the πάθος of the Pyrrhonist, he will be rash; as nobody can persuade by argument the man who feels pleasure that he does not feel pleasure and the man in pain that he is not in pain, so nobody can persuade the man who is persuaded that he is not persuaded (*M.* 8. 475).[69]

Furthermore—Sextus adds—if the Sceptic had asserted with assent that proof does not exist, perhaps he might be refuted by one who shows that proof exists; but the Pyrrhonist merely propounded the arguments against proof, *without assenting* to them (χωρὶς τοῦ συγκατατίθεσθαι τούτοις).

There are some important textual clues scattered in the passage I have just paraphrased that recall Sextus' treatment of the Sceptical φωναί, and help us to interpret what is happening here. Here the dogmatist faces the Sceptic with a dilemma, containing an embedded *charge* of self-refutation (περιτροπή); there, we found the dogmatist *charging* the Sceptic with holding beliefs (δογματίζειν), a behaviour that would betray the internal inconsistency of the Pyrrhonist's project of living ἀδοξάστως. In the one case the Sceptic would refute himself, denying the existence of proof and at the same time affirming its existence by admitting using it; in the other one, he would refute himself, by holding and expressing beliefs, through his φωναί, about the impossibility of having justified beliefs at all.[70]

We have seen in Section 2 how Sextus responds to the latter charge: not only would it be impossible to believe what is expressed by the Sceptical φωναί, if they were used as dogmatic maxims, but actually the Sceptic in uttering them merely avows his own πάθη, affirming nothing definitely (διαβεβαιούμενος) about external

[68] An argument is true if it is valid ('conclusive') and has true premisses (and thus a true conclusion). If an argument is not true, *a fortiori* it is not a proof (for the definition of ἀπόδειξις seen at n. 58).

[69] See also *M.* 11. 148–9.

[70] In this case the dogmatist's charge of self-contradiction is only implicit, hidden under the explicit charge of δογματίζειν (it is possibly echoed, however, at *PH* 1. 200).

objects. We get a similar answer to the dilemma about the PAP: the Sceptic does not affirm definitely (διαβεβαιοῦσθαι) either that the PAP is true (and hence is a proof), or that it is false. A question about the objective demonstrativeness or non-demonstrativeness of an argument is a question about something ἄδηλον, and since the Pyrrhonist never assents to anything unclear, Sextus refuses to take any position about this unclear technicality. What on the other hand Sextus does not refrain from saying is that at present the Sceptic finds the PAP persuasive, this persuasion being a mental πάθος that Sextus does not consider different from feeling pleasure or feeling pain; to be persuaded by the PAP does not mean, or imply, *believing* that the PAP *is* a proof (nor that its conclusion *is true*).[71] The plausibility of this point could certainly be disputed;[72] but, if we concede it to him, Sextus is perfectly right in saying that neither does a proof of the actual existence of proof count as a *refutation* of the Sceptic, nor does the bare fact of the Sceptic's presenting the PAP commit him to self-*refutation*.[73]

Sextus goes on to say that any dogmatic argument in favour of the existence of proof is so far from damaging the Pyrrhonist that, on the contrary, it is to his advantage:

> For if the arguments brought *against* proof have remained uncontradicted [ἀναντίρρητοι], and the arguments adopted *in favour* of proof's existence are in turn strong, adhering neither to the former nor to the latter let us agree to suspend judgement. (*M.* 8. 477)[74]

[71] For the two senses, weak and strong, of πείθεσθαι, somehow parallel to those of δογματίζειν, see *PH* 1. 229–30: 'And although both Academics and Sceptics say that they are persuaded by certain things, here too the difference between the two philosophies is clear. For "to be persuaded" [τὸ πείθεσθαι] is said in different senses; not resisting but simply following [ἕπεσθαι] without strong inclination or adherence . . . and sometimes assenting to something [συγκατατίθεσθαί τινι] by choice and with a kind of sympathy due to strong desire.'

[72] See above, n. 54.

[73] We find the most relevant elements of the passage above in the parallel passage at *PH* 2. 187: 'Now it is possible to reply against this, for example, that since we do not believe any argument to be demonstrative we do not say that the arguments against proof are absolutely [πάντως] demonstrative, but we say that they appear persuasive to us; but persuasive arguments are not necessarily demonstrative [οἱ δὲ πιθανοὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἰσὶν ἀποδεικτικοί].' The last clause is very important: it is a straight denial of the truth of the first horn of the initial dilemma, that allows the Sceptic to be persuaded by the PAPs without having to commit himself to the dogmatic thought that they are demonstrative.

[74] See also *PH* 2. 192: 'For if the arguments in favour of proof are persuasive—and let them be so—and the attacks directed against proof are also persuasive, then it is necessary to suspend judgement about proof too, saying that there no more is than is not proof.'

The *ἰσοσθένεια* of the Sceptical and dogmatic arguments (i.e. their equality with regard to persuasiveness and non-persuasiveness) brings the Sceptics to *ἐποχή*. The claim that the PAPs have remained *ἀνανπίρρητοι* is crucial for a correct understanding of our problem, by indicating Sextus' confidence about the fact that, at least up to now, the dogmatist has not refuted the PAPs.[75] This means not only that the dogmatist has not found any *direct* argument for their falsity (e.g. pointing out a false premiss or a fallacious inference), but also that his previous charge of self-refutation is considered a failure, given the Pyrrhonist's actual frame of mind as just explained.

And not only has Sextus rejected—and not embraced—the charge of self-refutation; it can also be said that, *if we trust in the sincerity of his account*, that rejection has to be considered justified. Sextus has admitted that he does not consider the PAP a proof (the demonstrativeness of the PAP is an unclear issue about which he does not dogmatize), but only that he is undogmatically persuaded by it; it is therefore mysterious how a charge of self-refutation of the kind we have seen above could be successful.

But the dogmatist is reluctant to die; he could still say that he does not believe in Sextus' account. As he did not believe that the Pyrrhonist utters his *φωναί* at a merely 'pathological' level, so he could refuse now to accept that the Pyrrhonist is only involuntarily persuaded by the PAP, without being committed to believing that the PAP *is* a proof.

In Section 2 I tried to reinterpret Sextus' alleged acceptance of the self-refutation of the Sceptical *φωναί* as a smart defence mechanism against this form of dogmatic obstinacy (I baptized this mechanism '*περιγραφή* argument'). I shall explain below that where McPherran sees Sextus finally accepting the self-refutation of the PAP, something closely resembling that mechanism is actually at work.

3.4. *The PAP's exception*

Sextus has described his mental disposition about the PAP and its conclusion, showing that such an uncommitted disposition protects

[75] Sextus' claim that the PAPs have remained unrefut*ed* does not mean that he considers them unrefut*able*. For the different semantic shades of the verbal adjectives ending in *-τος*, in ancient Greek and in Sextus' usage, see J. Barnes, *The Toils of Scepticism* (Cambridge, 1990), 17–19.

him against the charge of self-refutation and, more broadly, against any refutation: the dogmatist could also refute the PAP, but the refutation of the PAP would not in any case be a refutation of the Sceptic.

Nevertheless, Sextus is playing a dialectical game, and dialectic is a serious affair, with well-defined rules;[76] and the Pyrrhonist still owes the dogmatist an answer to the initial dilemma. It is true that Sextus' answer, if taken seriously, makes that dilemma in a certain sense unsound, because incomplete:[77] the choice is not merely between believing that the PAP is a proof and believing that it is not a proof; there is a third option, suspending judgement about the real demonstrativeness of the PAP, and this was Sextus' actual choice. But, as I have already said, the dogmatist could refuse to believe the sincerity of this choice: not only has Sextus presented an argument, but he also believes that it is a proof; otherwise he would not find it persuasive (and could never hope to persuade his adversary: remember the first horn of the initial dilemma).

I take the whole final passage of *Against the Logicians* as Sextus' keen answer to this implicit further worry:

> And even if it be conceded [κἂν συγχωρηθῇ] that the argument against proof is demonstrative, the dogmatists will not gain any advantage thereby in establishing the existence of proof, as we have already shown; for it concludes that proof does not exist, and if this is true it becomes false that proof exists. (*M.* 8. 478)

The very beginning of this passage is crucial for a correct understanding of what follows; the concessive protasis must not be understood as meaning that the Sceptic[78] does actually believe that the PAP is a proof.[79] Sextus here is only making an assumption *dialecti-*

[76] See e.g. Aulus Gellius 16. 2. 1–2: 'They say that it is a rule of the dialectical art [*legem disciplinae dialecticae*], that if there is inquiry and discussion of any subject, and you are called upon to answer a question which is asked, you should answer the question by a simple "yes" or "no". And those who do not observe that rule, but answer *more* than they were asked, or *differently*, are thought to be both uneducated and unobservant of the customs and laws of debate' (translation by J. C. Rolfe, *The* Attic Nights *of Aulus Gellius* (Cambridge and London, 1978)).

[77] For arguments considered unsound because of incompleteness (παρὰ ἔλλειψιν or κατὰ ἔλλειψιν) see *PH* 2. 150 and *M.* 8. 434.

[78] As McPherran has confirmed to me, his 'If, on the other hand, *the Dogmatists* concede the soundness of the PAP . . .' ('Homeopathy', 301) is a slip.

[79] This results even more clearly from the passage of *PH* (2. 187): 'But if they are demonstrative, *which we do not affirm* [ὅπερ οὐ διαβεβαιούμεθα], they are certainly also true.'

cally, to satisfy finally the dogmatist's request for a 'yes/no' answer to his dilemma. Sextus will show that even the apparently most compromising choice ('Yes, the PAP is a proof') cannot force the Pyrrhonist (via self-refutation) into the undesired admission of the existence of proof. The reason, as Sextus explicitly reminds us, is the same as he provided when the dilemma had been directed back to the dogmatist: it is not enough to say that if the PAP is a proof, then, by περιτροπή, proof exists; one should not overlook the fact that, if the PAP is a proof, its conclusion ('Proof does not exist') is true, and that it is therefore false that proof exists.[80]

While by the same argument Sextus concluded above with the assurance that from admitting that the PAP is a proof the belief in the existence of proof follows no more than the belief in its non-existence, now he voices a possible further reply by the dogmatist: 'Yes, they say, but the argument concluding that proof does not exist, being a proof, rejects itself [ἑαυτὸν ἐκβάλλει]' (*M.* 8. 479). At first glance it could seem that this objection does not bring anything new into our discussion; it could in fact be interpreted as a mere restatement of the charge of περιτροπή we have already seen at the very beginning and a few lines above (although such redundancy would be uncomfortable). But it is Sextus' answer that helps us to appreciate the fundamental newness of this objection: the PAP—Sextus specifies—does not reject itself in all cases (οὐ πάντως). In fact many things are said with an exception (καθ' ὑπεξαίρεσιν): as Zeus is said to be 'the father of gods and men' with the exception of himself, so also when the Pyrrhonists say that proof does not exist, they say so with the (implicit) exception of the argument that proves that proof does not exist; for this alone is a proof (*M.* 8. 479).

This answer contributes to making clear what the objection was; the rejection the dogmatist was speaking about is not the περιτροπή of the form:

[80] See *PH* 2. 187: 'But true arguments are those which conclude a truth by means of truths; thus their conclusion is true. But it was "Therefore, proof does not exist"; thus it is true that "Proof does not exist" by περιτροπή.' The final ἐκ περιτροπῆς could appear here quite unexpected: 'Proof does not exist' has been inferred starting from 'The PAPs are demonstrative', and the former, although inconsistent with the latter, is not its *contradictory*. But if we look at the dialectical context, this will appear perfectly meaningful: 'The PAPs are demonstrative' is the second horn of the dilemma the dogmatist submitted to the Sceptic in order to force him into admitting, by περιτροπή, that proof exists. But if as a result of seizing this horn the conclusion is that proof does not exist, the dogmatist's intended περιτροπή is subject to περιτροπή.

if the PAP is a proof, then there is at least one proof (the PAP itself), therefore proof exists (*contra* the PAP's conclusion):

$$P(PAP) \rightarrow (\exists x)P(x)$$

The rejection on the table here takes this form:

if the PAP is a proof, its conclusion ('Proof does not exist') is true; but then, if proof does not exist, the PAP itself is not a proof:

$$P(PAP) \rightarrow \neg(\exists x)P(x) \rightarrow \neg P(PAP)$$

Sextus' first reply consists in interpreting the conclusion of the PAP as containing an implicit exception: from the fact that the PAP is demonstrative, it follows that no proof exists *apart from the PAP*, but from that it clearly no longer follows that the PAP is not a proof. The PAP does not reject itself; it does not say that it itself is not a proof, and therefore it does not banish its own demonstrative power, whose effect is to prove that no other proof exists. At the same time, Sextus retains his immunity to the initial charge of περιτροπή; if the version of the PAP he presented is implicitly

(PAP*) $\langle \{p, q, r, \ldots\} \vdash$ No proof exists apart from the PAP*$\rangle$,

then even the assumption that the PAP* is a proof does not cause περιτροπή. The dogmatist is left with a very meagre consolation: under the assumption that the PAP* is a proof, the Sceptic will be committed to allowing that there exists one (and only one) proof, the PAP*.[81]

But Sextus is merciless; his further reply to the dogmatist's objection will take away even this final consolation from his adversary.[82]

[81] All this part about the possibility that the PAP is presented καθ' ὑπεξαίρεσιν is absent from the parallel passage in the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*.

[82] Actually, what to the dogmatist could appear a meagre consolation is for Sextus perhaps still too much to concede. As McPherran notices ('Homeopathy', 305), if the Pyrrhonist affirms that he can definitely *prove* that no proof exists (excepting the PAP itself), his position will be very close to that of those negative dogmatists (the Academics) who, *according to Sextus*, positively affirm—and no doubt claim to *apprehend*—that 'Everything is *non-apprehensible*' (*PH* 1. 226). For the use the Stoic Antipater made of something similar to Sextus' 'exception-move' *against* the Academics see M. F. Burnyeat, 'Antipater and Self-refutation: Elusive Arguments in Cicero's *Academica*', in B. Inwood and J. Mansfeld (eds.), *Assent and Argument: Studies in Cicero's* Academic Books (Utrecht, 1995), 277–310.

3.5. *The last move: the περιγραφή argument*

Sextus said above that *not in all the cases* (*οὐ πάντως*) does the PAP reject itself; when it is taken without any exception (not as an elliptical statement of the PAP*), the PAP does indeed reject itself, but

> even if it does reject itself [*κἂν αὑτὸν δὲ ἐκβάλλῃ*], the existence of proof is not thereby confirmed. For there are many things which dispose themselves in the same condition in which they dispose other things. Just as, for example, fire after having consumed the wood destroys also itself, and as purgatives after having driven the humours out of the bodies expel themselves as well, so too the argument against proof, having done away with [*ἀνελεῖν*] any proof, *can* [*δύναται*] *bracket* also *itself* along with them [*καὶ ἑαυτὸν συμπεριγράφειν*]. (*M.* 8. 480)

The verbs *δύναται* and *συμπεριγράφειν* and the simile of purgatives recall the passages about the self-bracketing of the Sceptical *φωναί*, and invite us to apply the same approach here. The PAP's conclusion is 'Proof does not exist' (here without any exception); but *if the PAP is considered* a proof by the Pyrrhonist (as Sextus is conceding here only dialectically), then that conclusion is a conclusion *about* the PAP itself too. The PAP, when (*and only when*) the Pyrrhonist gives the answer 'The PAP is a proof' to the dogmatist's dilemma, becomes itself one of the alleged proofs (and thereby self-referring), and by establishing that no proof exists, it brackets itself as well as the other alleged proofs.[83] The *self-bracketing* of the PAP that Sextus *accepts and embraces* has as its result the expunction of the PAP from the set of the alleged proofs; it is not a form of pragmatic self-refutation (as McPherran and Burnyeat believe), nor the *περιτροπή* with which the dogmatist charged the Pyrrhonist at the very beginning of the passage, and which I have proposed to classify as an instance of dialectical self-refutation.

I think that in the analysis of the passage much confusion has been caused by bringing into the picture the concept of pragmatic self-refutation, and collapsing into a single entity a sentence, the way in which it is presented, and the reasoning in support of that

[83] Here is the parallel passage in the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*PH* 2. 188): 'Arguments, like purgative drugs which evacuate themselves along with the matters present in the body, can [*δύνανται*] bracket themselves along with [*ἑαυτοὺς συμπεριγράφειν*] the other arguments which are said to be demonstrative.'

sentence.[84] On the contrary, we should carefully distinguish three distinct linguistic objects implied in Sextus' treatment of the PAP:

(1) the PAP itself (the whole set of sentences $\langle \{p, q, r, \ldots\} \vdash$ Proof does not exist$\rangle$);
(2) the statement 'The PAP is a proof';
(3) the conclusion of the PAP ('Proof does not exist').

The PAP *is not* inclusive of the thought that it itself is a proof; the very aim of the dogmatist's dilemma is to force the Pyrrhonist's commitment to this. The acronym 'PAP', that I have used hitherto for uniformity with McPherran, is in an important sense misleading: Sextus always (and cautiously) speaks of ὁ κατὰ τῆς ἀποδείξεως λόγος, this very name leaving the demonstrativeness or otherwise of that argument unprejudiced. A more exact label would have been, therefore, 'AAP' (*argument* against proof), where 'argument' is to be understood in the broadest and least technical sense possible (any set of sentences disposed in some orderly manner). I shall use hereafter this more adequate acronym.

The dogmatist's initial charge of *self-refutation* (περιτροπή) concerns the connected statement of (3) and (2). Sextus has stated (3) (as the last step of (1)); if he endorses (2) in answering to the dilemma, he is forced into admitting ¬(3), refuting himself:

(*a*) Proof does not exist.	(3)
(*b*) The AAP is a proof.	(2)
(*c*) Proof exists.	from (*b*) (περιτροπή of (*a*))

The dogmatist's objection of *self-rejection* regards (1) and (3), *under the assumption of* (2):

(A) $\langle \{p, q, r, \ldots\} \vdash$ Proof does not exist.$\rangle$	(1), previously propounded
(B) The AAP is a proof.	(2), assumed dialectically
(C) The conclusion of the AAP is true.	from (B)
(D) Proof does not exist.	(3), from (A) and (C)
(E) The AAP is not a proof.	from (D)

[84] See Burnyeat, 'Protagoras', 53: 'What the Skeptic says is falsified by his saying it, where his saying it is inclusive of, not—as it would be in a present-day discussion of self-refutation—exclusive of, the reasoning with which he supports his position'; 59: 'the way a proposition is presented, the scope of this notion being enlarged to take in supporting arguments as part of the advancing of a thesis'.

What is the conclusion (E)? (E) is the rejection of (A), that is of the AAP, from the set of the alleged proofs, being a result of its self-bracketing; and (A) has become self-bracketing *only* under the assumption of (B). Not only is the AAP not involved in any self-refutation, but it is not even self-bracketing *tout court*. When presented along with the further assumption that it is a proof, the AAP inscribes itself into its scope, bracketing and rejecting itself in the plain sense that it says that it too is not a proof, and expunges itself from the set of alleged proofs in which it had been assumed.

The parallelism with Sextus' use of self-bracketing with regard to the Sceptical *φωναί* appears amazingly exact: in this latter the *περιγραφή* argument shows how it is impossible for the Pyrrhonist to dogmatize, even if he wished to *διαβεβαιοῦσθαι* his *φωναί*; here, the *περιγραφή* argument shows that it is impossible for the Pyrrhonist to be subject to *περιτροπή* and involuntarily admit the existence of proof when he propounds his AAP. Even if the Pyrrhonist should claim that the AAP is a proof (the necessary condition for being subject to *περιτροπή*), he would be logically committed to believing that no proof exists, the alleged PAP not excepted, and thus he would avoid the danger of *περιτροπή*; and the Pyrrhonist is perfectly aware of that.

Self-refutation (*περιτροπή*), once again, is not in the picture; or, better, it is, but only as a charge which the Sceptic strongly rejects. And Sextus refutes the *truth* of the charge against himself in virtue of his actual mental attitude, and its very logical *possibility* by his exquisite *περιγραφή* argument.

I think that McPherran's claim that here we have a form of pragmatic self-refutation in which 'a proposition is falsified by the particular mode in which it is presented' ('Homeopathy', 293–4) does not grasp the real mechanism at work in this passage. Apart from the non-trivial fact that the AAP *is not* a proposition, what could it mean that the AAP is *falsified*? That one of its premisses is shown to be false? That one of its inferences is shown to be fallacious? That its conclusion is shown to be false? None of these conclusions can justifiably be drawn by the argument I analysed above. What could be correctly regarded as subject to *περιτροπή* is the assumption (B) ('The AAP is a proof'); one who endorses (B) is finally forced into admitting its contradictory, namely (E) 'The AAP is not a proof'.[85] But (B) *is not* the AAP, even if it is a necessary condition for the AAP

[85] Sextus does not make this claim, because he is not interested here in the fate of

to bracket itself; I see no plausible reason to say that the AAP is *refuted* by itself. The only sense in which the AAP can be said to be *cancelled* is that, *under certain conditions*, one has honestly to admit that it is not a proof. I specify 'under certain conditions' because such confession makes sense only in the case in which the AAP had been previously taken to be a proof; to employ once again the philological metaphor, it could be said that it would be impossible to bracket something that has not even been written.

Both the AAPs and the *φωναί* can be compared to expunging brackets; they indicate respectively the expunction of the alleged proofs and of the alleged truths. Their status is different from the status of what they expunge; the AAPs are not advanced as members of the set of the alleged proofs, the Sceptical *φωναί* are not considered members of the set of the alleged truths. In the same way, the nature of diacritical marks, like expunging brackets, is intrinsically different from that of the other signs that can appear on the page of a codex; the *περιγραφαί* are *in* the text, but not *part* of the text.

Suppose that a dogmatist is—or pretends to be—unable to grasp the real nature of the AAPs and *φωναί*; he insists on claiming that the AAPs are meant by the Pyrrhonist to be proofs and that the *φωναί* are meant to express true maxims, and thus he charges his adversary with self-refutation and dogmatism. It will be sufficient to explain to him that, in this case, the AAPs and the *φωναί* would be part of their own scope of application, and would immediately cancel, respectively, their own alleged demonstrativeness and truth; and the Pyrrhonist is perfectly aware of that. Such a situation would be like a circumstance in which someone (say, a dull copyist) is unable to understand the difference between ordinary linguistic signs (e.g. letters of the Greek alphabet) and diacritical signs (e.g. a pair of expunging round brackets). Someone tells him that whenever in the exemplar he finds something included within round brackets, he is not to reproduce it on his codex. The copyist follows the instructions, but continues to consider the brackets themselves as a part of the text: he does not copy what is included within brackets, but he zealously reproduces the outer text *and* the brackets themselves. The copyist's supervisor tries hard to explain to him the particular status of the expunging brackets, but his attempt is un-

(B), which he does not believe, but in that of (A) (the AAP), which he does present and wants to present in his philosophical practice.

successful. The supervisor, however, does not lose his well-known tranquillity, and devises a trick to obtain the desired result from the copyist (a manuscript in which the original text appears, without the expunged passages or, needless to say, the expunging brackets). He explains to him that the pairs of round brackets mean not only 'Don't copy what we bracket!', but also 'Don't copy us either!'; he explains to him that the round brackets are actually 'self-bracketing brackets'.

Obviously this would be an imprecise and naïve account of what expunging brackets are and of how they operate; but it works, and in such a desperate situation that is enough. Actually expunging brackets do not need to expunge themselves too, simply because they are not the kind of things that need to (or *can*) be expunged from a text; the Sceptical *φωναί* do not need to say to themselves 'Actually you are no more believable than your opposite', simply because the Pyrrhonist does not believe that they are true; the AAP does not need to say to itself 'Actually you are not demonstrative', simply because the Pyrrhonist does not believe that the AAP is demonstrative. None the less, if the dogmatist wishes to behave like the dull copyist, the Pyrrhonist still has something effective to say.

I hope it is now clear enough that Sextus' similes of purgatives and fire are intended further to delineate the functioning of the *περιγραφή* argument, by depicting an expunction without residues, and are not, once again, similes for *περιτροπή*; and I think that the purgatives simile is much more helpful and worth analysing in detail. Suppose that when the Sceptic presents the AAP he additionally believes that the AAP is a proof (he thinks, and is disposed to concede, that he is presenting a PAP); in this case the PAP, it could be said just a bit naïvely, is 'introduced' into his mind among all the other arguments taken to be demonstrative, as purgatives are introduced into the body among the humours. The PAP, in virtue of its alleged demonstrativeness, concludes persuasively that proof does not exist, and that all the arguments previously considered genuine proofs actually are not; these arguments are expelled from the set of the alleged proofs, or are bracketed, as spurious words or sentences could be bracketed in a Greek manuscript. In parallel, purgatives expel the harmful humours from the body. Having applied its conclusion to all the other alleged proofs, the PAP brackets itself too, supposedly being itself a proof, and says that it itself is not

a proof (the set of the arguments considered genuine proofs is now completely empty); in the same way, having expelled the humours from the body, purgatives also expel themselves.

There is a further felicitous simile[86] for the self-bracketing character which the AAP would assume if considered a genuine proof, and for the use that Sextus makes of it here:

> And again, just as it is not impossible for one who has ascended to a high place [*ἐφ' ὑψηλὸν τόπον*] by a ladder to overturn the ladder with his foot after his ascent, so also it is not unlikely that the Sceptic, having arrived at establishing what he proposed by means of the argument showing the non-existence of proof, as if it were by a scaling ladder, should then do away with (*ἀνελεῖν*) this very argument. (*M.* 8. 481)

We find in this ladder simile a temporal ingredient that is actually scattered in the whole passage: *first* the PAP does away with the other proofs, and *then* brackets itself; *first* the fire consumes the wood, and *then* destroys also itself; *first* purgatives expel the humours from the body, and *then* themselves; *first* the man ascends to a high place, and *then* overturns the ladder he has just used.[87]

McPherran grounds his overall interpretation of Sextus' acceptance of self-refutation on this temporal ingredient: the 'temporal gap' between the impression of finding the Sceptical *φωναί* and PAPs persuasive and the realization of their self-refutation (absolute in the former case, pragmatic in the latter) leaves sufficient room for them to perform their function (to induce *ἐποχή*) in the dialectical play against the dogmatist.[88]

I shall not try here to supply an account of the complex and

[86] See proposition 6.54 of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: 'Meine Sätze erläutern dadurch, daß sie der, welcher mich versteht, am Ende als unsinnig erkennt, wenn er durch sie—auf ihnen—über sie hinausgestiegen ist. (Er muß sozusagen die Leiter wegwerfen, nachdem er auf ihr hinaufgestiegen ist).'

[87] At *PH* 2. 188 instead of the simile of the ladder we find an analogy with 'Nothing is true', that appeared incidentally also in *PH* 1. 14 as equivalent to 'Everything is false': 'This is not incongruous, since the phrase "Nothing is true" not only denies [*ἀναιρεῖ*] everything else but also refutes itself along with them [*ἑαυτὴν ἐκείνοις συμπεριτρέπει*].'

As for *PH* 1. 14–15, this analogy can be quite misleading and induce a wrong identification between the *self-bracketing* of the AAP and the *self-refutation* of 'Nothing is true'. Although dangerous, however, the analogy allows us to repeat a non-trivial point: the *περιτροπή* of sentences such as 'Everything is false' and 'Nothing is true' is a kind of cancellation just as the *περιγραφή* of the Sceptical *φωναί* and AAPs is a (*different*) kind of cancellation (see p. 291). Sextus' analogy between the two cases is therefore justified; it is our task not to mistake the *analogy* for an *identity*.

[88] See 'Homeopathy', 316.

interesting defence McPherran makes of the plausibility of Sextus' final move of accepting self-refutation, nor to point out the factors I still consider unconvincing in it. That defence is founded on the presupposition that Sextus happily admits that his *φωναί* and *λόγοι*, when considered from a dogmatic perspective, are self-*refuting*; I hope to have shown thoroughly enough why this presupposition itself is not correct.

I shall spend, however, just a few words on the temporal aspect on which McPherran lays such stress; it is true that the temporal gap seems to be quite an important element for Sextus in the final section of *Against the Logicians*. But it is also an indisputable datum that in none of the other three passages analysed above does such a temporal variable appear: '*οὐδὲν μᾶλλον* says that it too, along with the other things, is *οὐ μᾶλλον*, and hence it brackets itself along with the other things' (*PH* 1. 14); 'We [the Sceptics] do not affirm definitely that they [the *φωναί*] are absolutely true, since we say that they can do away with themselves, bracketing themselves along with what they are said of' (*PH* 1. 206); 'Arguments, like purgative drugs which evacuate themselves along with the matters present in the body, can actually bracket themselves along with the other arguments which are said to be demonstrative' (*PH* 2. 188).

If I was right in considering the four passages to be strictly related and to present a homogeneous philosophical strategy, the most plausible thing to say is that the temporal gap between the expunction of the alleged proofs and the realization of the self-bracketing character of the AAP itself can certainly exist at a psychological level,[89] but does not play any role in the work the *περιγραφή* argument is supposed to do.[90] The only thing Sextus absolutely needs is

[89] It can be said for sure that in dialectical contexts like those we examined above the explicit statement 'The AAP is not a proof' follows one step after the conclusion 'No proof exists' (see above, p. 308, where (E) follows (D)).

[90] In an important sense, the similes of fire and of purgatives do not fit this temporal idea perfectly: it is true that they describe processes that are extended in time, but it is also true that it is inexact to say that fire destroys itself *only after* having burnt the wood, or that purgatives expel themselves *only after* having driven out the harmful humours. It would be much more exact to say that fire burns out *more and more as* the wood is burnt, and that it dies out in the very instant in which the last residue of wood is consumed; or that purgatives are expelled *progressively* in the very expulsion of the humours; when the last residues of humours are expelled, the last residues of purgatives are expelled too along with them (for a similar remark see M. Nussbaum, 'Skeptical Purgatives: Therapeutic Arguments in Ancient Skepticism', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 29 (1991), 521–57 at 551). Also in the simile of the 'self-bracketing brackets' that I tried to develop above, the temporal aspect

that the AAPs should not be bracketed *before* they can do the work they are supposed to do, as bizarre purgatives somehow vanishing before being swallowed; and Sextus seems to have no doubts that such a requirement is fully satisfied by his περιγραφή argument. I shall explain in the Conclusion why such confidence might be too easy and actually exposed to substantial questions and doubts.

4. Conclusion

From the very beginning of my analysis I have tried to point out the several features that make Sextus' treatment of the Sceptical φωναί and λόγοι strongly parallel, starting from the dialectical role the περιγραφή argument plays in both cases. But that parallelism, although very wide and attractive, is not absolute.

We have seen that in both cases the starting-point is a charge which the dogmatist brings against the Pyrrhonist: the charge of dogmatizing (δογματίζειν), in the case of the utterance of the φωναί, and the charge of self-refutation (περιτροπή), in the case of the Pyrrhonist's presentation of the AAPs.

In both cases Sextus rejects the charge, because of the actual attitude the Pyrrhonist has when he makes his utterances: his φωναί are mere avowals of his mental πάθη, and are not intended as true assertions about reality; and although his AAPs are persuasive for the Pyrrhonist at present, he suspends judgement about their actual demonstrativeness (he does not want to give a positive answer to the dogmatist's dilemma, whose second horn contains the charge of περιτροπή).

Not only does Sextus reject the dogmatist's charges, however, but he wants also to show that what he is accused of is actually something impossible, even from a strictly logical point of view. The Sceptic is well aware of the fact that even if he advanced his φωναί as *true* maxims (a necessary condition for being guilty of dogmatism), the result would be that, via self-bracketing (and not via self-refutation), he would not believe them (and that guarantees that he does not dogmatize in uttering them). Again, even if the

does not seem to play any appreciable role. The same holds for the passages seen in sect. 1.3: I might not realize instantaneously that the concept of 'right' has been cancelled by the very argument that has cancelled the concept of 'left'; nevertheless, the two concepts, being correlatives, have been cancelled *in the same instant*.

Pyrrhonist conceded that the AAPs are proofs (are PAPs), the effect would be that, via self-bracketing (and not via self-refutation), he would not believe that they are proofs (any charge of περιτροπή becoming impossible).[91]

Up to this point, the main elements of parallelism are apparent; let us see now where and how the two accounts diverge. The most basic difference rests on the trivial fact that the AAPs, unlike the φωναί, are *arguments*. Sextus can even say that his φωναί are merely the verbal expressions of his present state of mind, and in this way avoid the charge of dogmatizing; one who utters οὐδὲν μᾶλλον on finding himself in a mental state of ἐποχή would be, in an important sense, no different from one who utters an 'ouch' when in a state of pain. This interjective nature of the Sceptical utterances might appear naïve, but it is still perfectly consistent.

But in the case of the AAPs this account is not adequate. Sextus cannot be satisfied with showing that, when the Pyrrhonist presents the AAPs, he is not refuting *himself*; the AAPs are arguments, and one function of arguments is to persuade *other* people of something (their conclusion), not merely to record what one feels. Sextus certainly has every right to claim that *he* finds the AAPs persuasive (to a certain degree), and at the same time to refuse to decide whether the AAPs are genuine proofs or not. Nevertheless, he cannot confine himself to this kind of first-person confession.

In the case of the AAPs, self-bracketing has to work not only as a defensive mechanism against the charge of περιτροπή. As I pointed out in the last section, Sextus has also to guarantee that the AAPs keep the capacity to persuade *the dogmatist* that proof does not exist, to the same degree to which the arguments in favour of proof persuade the dogmatist that proof exists; only in this case will the dogmatist finally suspend judgement about the existence of proof. We have seen above that Sextus is confident of having guaranteed the AAPs a persuasive power, and not only safety from περιτροπή; let us consider now whether this confidence is justified.

The dogmatist, on the one hand, starts from the assumption

[91] The dialectical and concessive character of the περιγραφή argument is apparent in the case of the AAP: the Sceptic does not claim that the AAP is a proof; *even if he concedes* that it is one, the AAP does not necessarily reject itself; *even if* it rejects itself, the existence of proof is not thereby confirmed. For this Gorgian-style line of argument and for the large use Sextus makes of it see A. A. Long, 'Methods of Argument in Gorgias, *Palamedes*', in K. Boudouris (ed.), *Ἡ Ἀρχαία Σοφιστική/The Sophistic Movement* (Athens, 1984), 233–41.

stated in the first horn of his dilemma: (*a*) if the AAPs are not recognized as demonstrative, they are not credible (an argument is credible only if it is a proof). The Pyrrhonist, on the other hand, thinks that such a requirement is excessive and claims that (*b*) not all persuasive arguments are demonstrative (even an argument that is not recognized as demonstrative can be persuasive.)[92]

Here again is the περιγραφή argument, as I sketched it in the last section:

(1) ⟨{*p*, *q*, *r*, . . .} ⊢ Proof does not exist.⟩	AAP
(2) The AAP is a proof.	dialectically assumed
(3) The conclusion of the AAP is true.	from (2)
(4) Proof does not exist.	from (1) and (3)
(5) The AAP is not a proof.	from (4)

As a defensive mechanism against the dogmatist's charge of περιτροπή, the περιγραφή argument seems to be entirely successful.[93] From assuming that the AAP is a proof and the AAP itself, it follows that no proof exists (the AAP not excepted); even if the Sceptic were committed to the compromising assertion of (2) (which he actually is not), he would not end up admitting, by περιτροπή, the existence of proof (at least no more than he would end up admitting its non-existence).[94]

Also *as a positive argument* intended to lead the dogmatist to ἐποχή, Sextus' περιγραφή argument seems at first sight to work: it concludes that proof does not exist in a credible way, namely through an argument, the AAP, which on assumption (2) is a proof (the dogmatist's requirement (*a*) is therefore satisfied). But why on earth should a dogmatist grant premiss (2)? Let me suggest a possible answer. The dogmatist has not yet produced any argument capable of denying the demonstrativeness of the AAP (by showing, for example, that the AAP contains some false premisses, or some fallacious inferences). The burden of proof is on him; given what counts as a proof from a dogmatic perspective, the Sceptical AAPs

[92] See above, n. 73.

[93] I consider in the same way successful the περιγραφή argument in reply to the charge of δογματίζειν.

[94] See above, p. 300. Actually, as we already know, the general assumption (*b*) ('Not all persuasive arguments are demonstrative') allows the Pyrrhonist to find the AAP persuasive without any need to consider it a proof. But (*b*) also permits the Pyrrhonist to be equally persuaded by the arguments in favour of the existence of proof, and thus to suspend his judgement about this unclear issue.

have the external appearance of genuine proofs and thus, until he has proof to the contrary, the dogmatist should admit that this is what they are. In virtue of his own high standards of assent and argument, the dogmatist cannot confine himself to *saying* that the AAPs, unlike many other proof-like arguments, are not demonstrative, merely because he does not like their conclusion, without giving any reason.[95] If he wished to do that, he ought to admit that his arguments too cannot be considered proofs; but since he will be unlikely to renounce to the demonstrativeness of his own arguments, he ought honestly to grant that the AAPs too are proofs, and accept premiss (2).

An alert reader should feel dissatisfied with this whole line of reasoning. There is actually a straightforward argument that shows the falsity of (2), blocking from the very beginning the argument sketched above: the assumption (2) ('The AAP *is* a proof') has, as its last consequence, (5) ('The AAP *is not* a proof'). But, (5) being the contradictory of (2), we have the result that (2) implies its own contradictory (in Sextus' own terms, (2) is subject to περιτροπή):

$(\Pi 2)\ \ (2)\rightarrow\neg(2)$

Now, the following is a valid formula of the sentential calculus:

$(CM)\ \ (p\rightarrow\neg p)\rightarrow\neg p$

This formula is called *Consequentia Mirabilis*:[96] if a sentence implies its own contradictory, it is (necessarily) false. From the *Mirabilis* and (Π2) we can easily infer, by *modus ponens*:

$$\neg(2)$$

(2) is false, or, more precisely, is necessarily false; it is logically impossible that the AAP is a genuine proof. The dogmatist has at his disposal a powerful argument against (2); Sextus cannot assume

[95] The Pyrrhonist, on the contrary, being not committed to these high standards, can reject an unsound argument even if he does not know wherein the fallacy lies (see *PH* 2. 250–3).

[96] Usually the name *Consequentia Mirabilis* (attested for the first time in the 17th cent.) is primarily attributed to the formula

$(LC)\ \ (\neg p\rightarrow p)\rightarrow p,$

labelled also *Lex Clavii*, and only consequently to the negative form (*CM*) presented above, that follows from (*LC*) by a simple replacement of the variables. For the history of this formula see F. Bellissima and P. Pagli, *Consequentia Mirabilis: Una regola logica tra matematica e filosofia* (Florence, 1996).

(2) as the starting premiss of his argument, not even dialectically. No one could ever believe that the AAP is a proof.

The realization of the necessary falsity of (2) would prevent Sextus—as well as anyone else—from endorsing the second horn of the dogmatist's dilemma, and so would allow him to avoid the charge of περιτροπή, playing indirectly the same role as the περιγραφή argument in its defensive aspect. But now Sextus is left with no argument to persuade his adversary: he has to seize the first horn of the dilemma, and say that the AAP is not a proof. He can still say, perhaps, that the AAP, although admittedly non-demonstrative, appears persuasive *to him*, just as much as the arguments in favour of proof, but he can no longer hope to lead the dogmatist to ἐποχή; the dogmatist will never be persuaded by the AAP which he knows for certain not to be a proof (see (*a*) above).

If the Sceptic really—though mysteriously—finds the AAP persuasive and is in a mental state of ἐποχή about the existence of proof, perhaps the dogmatist would be rash to accuse him of either self-refutation or insincerity, but, on the other hand, the Sceptic seems to have no cure left for the dogmatic disease. It seems that the maximum we might concede to Sextus is that all his talk about the AAPs is fairly useless: he and the dogmatist have achieved only a draw, each of them sticking to his starting position (but most people would say that the Sceptic has achieved the draw simply by giving up fighting).

But are we so certain that the dogmatist really has at his disposal an argument against (2) based on the application of 'our' *Consequentia Mirabilis*?[97] To begin with, we do not find in Sextus (or in other ancient sources) a simple argument against the AAPs based on the *Mirabilis* like the one I presented above. And it is difficult to believe that the dogmatists would not have taken advantage of the opportunity to prove, in accordance with their own high standards of argument, that the AAPs necessarily were not proofs, *had this been a real possibility for them*.[98] Although quite impressive, however, this argument *ex silentio* cannot be considered decisive, since it is not implausible that Sextus could in his account have suppressed such a dangerous anti-Sceptical argument.

[97] I already warned above against the misapplication of modern logical categories (e.g. pragmatic self-refutation) to Sextus' dialectical approach.

[98] On the contrary, we have seen the dogmatist content with submitting to the Sceptic a dilemma which apparently leaves open the possibility that the AAPs *are* demonstrative.

Nevertheless, there is a further, more general, point to raise. If we look carefully through Sextus' work for some instance of περιτροπή in which the 'reversed' thesis is *for this reason* said to be false, we shall be disappointed. There is no case in which Sextus claims that a given sentence is necessarily false *because* it implies its own contradictory. Furthermore, I think that it is not even completely correct to speak of sentences as the subjects of self-refutation: it is always a statement made in a particular dialectical context (or the utterer himself) that is said to be exposed to περιτροπή: Burnyeat's account of *dialectical* self-refutation probably turns out to be the best account of περιτροπή *tout court* in Sextus' work. There is someone, X, who makes an assertion, *p*; someone else, Y, starting from *p* and through a more or less long and complex series of steps (implying more or fewer additional assumptions) manages to force X into admitting that not-*p*. Here the dialectical game is over, with the victory of Y and the περιτροπή of X; there is never a further formal reflection about the fact that *p*, having implied its contradictory, expressed thereby from the very beginning something logically false.

Consider again the example of περιτροπή I quoted on p. 268, probably the most formal instance of self-refutation we can find in the whole Sextan corpus. Not only is the περιτροπή explicitly ascribed to those who assert that 'All things are false', and not to the sentence itself; it is also clear that Sextus halts one step before the application of the *Mirabilis*. The final remark 'Therefore, if all things are false, not all things are false' seems to be a mere summary of the previous argument;[99] from it Sextus does not infer the further conclusion that 'All things are false' is necessarily false because it implies its own contradictory.

Not only does Sextus *never* employ the *Consequentia Mirabilis* in his cases of περιτροπή, but, more generally, to the best of my knowledge, no similar rule is explicitly attested by our sources either for Hellenistic logic[100] or, more broadly, for ancient

[99] It seems to mean something like 'They said that all things are false, but now they have to admit that not all things are false.'

[100] In her reconstruction of Stoic syllogistic, Susanne Bobzien puts the *Mirabilis* in a list of sequents that have such a form that no compounds of propositions of that form 'would be syllogisms in the Stoic system, although all of them are correct sequents in PC'. She claims also not to have found any documentation in the sources 'that the Stoics accepted either all corresponding conditionals of a form as true, or a metalogical principle that in some way corresponds to the sequent' ('Stoic Syllogistic', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 14 (1996), 133–92 at 183–4). These

logic.[101] To say confidently that the dogmatist has at hand a strong argument against (2) may mean providing him anachronistically with a weapon he would be unable to handle. Before discarding Sextus' περιγραφή argument as a hopeless failure, therefore, we should find some clear example in ancient logic in which some rule like the *Mirabilis* is, if not explicitly stated, at least unequivocally applied. If we cannot, the dogmatist does not yet have any decisive argument against (2); so he should either accept (2) and *all* its consequences, among which there is not only (5) ('The AAP is not a proof'), but (4) as well ('No proof exists'), or reject (2), by saying that the AAPs are not genuine proofs, or by suspending judgement about this unclear issue. But in this latter case, perhaps, he ought for coherence to deny (or suspend judgement about) the demonstrativeness of all other proof-like arguments too.

There is actually another argument that could conclude the falsity of (2). We have seen at 3.2 that if the dogmatist said in answer to Sextus' returned dilemma that the AAP is a proof, then, according to Sextus, he would affirm the existence of proof no more than he would deny it. From 'The AAP is a proof' it follows that (at least one) proof does exist; but it follows likewise that the conclusion of the AAP is true, i.e. that proof does not exist. Sextus' implicit moral is that the dogmatist, confronted with such equipollence, should be led to ἐποχή; but an alert modern logician, again, would get a very different conclusion from Sextus' premisses. The following is a valid inference-schema of the sentential calculus:

$$\begin{array}{ll} & p \rightarrow q \\ & p \rightarrow \neg q \\ \therefore & \neg p \end{array}$$

sequents (including the *Mirabilis*) cannot be analysed into indemonstrables either (at least according to Bobzien's reconstruction of the Stoic θέματα).

[101] It seems to me that Aristotle too, in his well-known treatment of the 'self-destroying' statements 'Everything is true' and 'Everything is false', does not apply the *Mirabilis*, while he does presuppose the same dialectical background we have found in Sextus: 'Further, all such arguments are exposed to the often-expressed objection, that they destroy themselves [ἑαυτοὺς ἀναιρεῖ]. For *he who says* that everything is true makes the statement contrary to his own also true, so that his own is not true (for the contrary statement denies that it is true), while *he who says* that everything is false makes himself also false' (*Metaph.* Γ 8, 1012^{b}13–18, translation by W. D. Ross, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton, 1984)). The dialectical interchange is a necessary background also for the refutation of the deniers of the principle of non-contradiction (Arist. *Metaph.* Γ 4, 1006^{a}11–15).

But, hence, we have:

If (p) the AAP is a proof, then (q) proof exists.
(by *περιτροπή*)
If (p) the AAP is a proof, then ($\neg q$) proof does not exist.
(by the truth of the AAP's conclusion)
∴ ($\neg p$) the AAP is not a proof. $\neg$(2)

One could say, again: 'The dogmatic adversaries of Sextus, and in particular the Stoics, were certainly skilled logicians, but they were not as skilled as present-day logicians are'. But this time we have a little evidence that the inference schema needed to refute (2) was known to the Stoics. Origen (*Contra Celsum* 7. 15) preserves the following Stoic schema, which he calls *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν θεώρημα* ('theorem from two mode-premisses'):[102]

If the first, then the second.
If the first, then not the second.
Therefore, not the first.

Yet, Origen is our only source both for the schema and for its application; it is therefore extremely hard to say *just when* and *how broadly* the Stoics used it.

The name *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν θεώρημα* (but only the name) is actually attested in Sextus also (*PH* 2. 3); but I think it cannot be excluded that in *PH* 2. 3 Sextus is referring to some different argument, since *οἱ διὰ δύο τροπικῶν* are seemingly *all* those 'two-premiss arguments composed of two mode-premisses which have a simple proposition as conclusion', where 'mode-premisses' are broadly those 'premisses which are a disjunction or a conditional or a (negated) conjunction'.[103]

It is a fact, however, that Sextus *never* presents, criticizes, or uses the *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν* argument in his work; so it is hardly odd that he does not evoke it against himself in the final part of *Against the Logicians*. Moreover, even if Sextus knew the *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν* as it is preserved by Origen, this would not imply that Sextus should grant its soundness. There is a passage in the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*PH* 2. 188–92) in which Sextus argues that the

[102] For the meaning of 'mode-premiss' (*τροπικόν*) see below.
[103] Bobzien, 'Stoic Syllogistic', 169.

dogmatist's constructive dilemma in favour of the existence of proof (see p. 298) is invalid:[104]

[A] If the conditional 'If proof exists, proof exists' is sound, the opposite of its consequent, i.e. 'Proof does not exist', must conflict [μάχεσθαι] with 'Proof exists'; for this is the antecedent of the conditional. [B] But it is impossible, according to them, for a conditional composed of conflicting statements to be sound. [C] For the conditional announces that if its antecedent is the case, then so too is its consequent, and conflicting statements announce the opposite—that if either one of them is the case, it is impossible for the other to hold. [D] If, therefore, this conditional—'If proof exists, proof exists'—is sound, then the conditional 'If proof does not exist, proof exists' cannot be sound. (*PH* 2. 188)[105]

[A] is clearly true for anyone who adopts for conditionals the truth conditions involved by the (probably) Chrysippean συνάρτησις ('connectedness'):

Those who introduce connectedness [συνάρτησις] say that a conditional is sound when the opposite of its consequent conflicts [μάχηται] with its antecedent; according to them, the conditionals just stated [among which 'If it is not the case that there are indivisible elements of things, there are indivisible elements of things'] will be unsound, but 'If it is day, it is day' will be true. (*PH* 2. 111)

[B], on the contrary, has aroused some debate: pointing out that the reasons given in [C] for attributing [B] to the Stoics ('according to them') look unsatisfactory, Stopper argued that [B] 'is not a piece of Stoic logic but a consequence of a Sextan fallacy':[106] one who adopts συνάρτησις is not thereby committed to the truth of thesis [B]. On the other hand, in a series of articles Nasti has maintained that [B] is not only a genuine Stoic thesis, but a pivotal, even if unnoticed, text for correctly understanding the meaning and truth conditions of συνάρτησις.[107]

[104] A different argument based on the charge of redundancy (παρολκή) is presented at *M.* 8. 292–4.

[105] Actually Sextus' argument shows only that the dogmatist's dilemma is *necessarily false* (it is impossible that all its premisses are true, since they are 'mutually destructive'), and not that it is logically invalid, as the adjectives ἀσύνακτος (*PH* 2. 188) and οὐχ ὑγιής (*PH* 2. 192) might suggest. However, it is not puzzling that Sextus employs these terms here, given that he is sometimes also unafraid of using them for arguments which we consider materially false (see e.g. the above-mentioned arguments unsound because of incompleteness: n. 77).

[106] M. R. Stopper, 'Schizzi pirroniani', *Phronesis*, 28 (1983), 265–97 at 284.

[107] M. Nasti De Vincentis, 'Logica scettica e implicazione stoica', in G. Gian-

I shall not enter here into the details of this debate; what is interesting for us is that, *were* [B] *a genuine piece of Stoic logic*, the Stoics themselves could not coherently consider the διὰ δύο τροπικῶν a sound argument. If $p \rightarrow q$ is sound, then $\neg q$ conflicts with p, but hence $p \rightarrow \neg q$ cannot be sound: it is impossible that both premisses of the argument should be sound. Sextus could charge his adversaries with inconsistency: they wish to use an argument the soundness of which they themselves ought to reject given *their* concept of sound conditional.

There remains the possibility that [B] is really the result of a Sextan fallacy. I think, however, that it is possible to devise an argument against the validity of the διὰ δύο τροπικῶν on the sole basis of the Chrysippean definition of συνάρτησις, without employing the debatable [B]. We have seen above that those who adopt συνάρτησις believe that the conditional 'If it is not the case that there are indivisible elements of things, there are indivisible elements of things' is unsound, clearly because the opposite of its consequent does not conflict with its antecedent (since they are the same ἀξίωμα, and on the assumption that no ἀξίωμα conflicts with itself). More generally, it seems prima facie that no conditional of the form $\neg p \rightarrow p$ or $p \rightarrow \neg p$ can be sound if one accepts the Chrysippean interpretation of conditionals. Chrysippean dialectic thus might turn out to be a system containing what is known as 'Aristotle's thesis':

(AT) $\neg(\neg p \rightarrow p)$

Aristotle himself proved that from endorsing (AT) it follows that $p \rightarrow q$ and $\neg p \rightarrow q$ cannot be sound together;[108] similarly, it would be easy to show that in a system adopting συνάρτησις $p \rightarrow q$ and $p \rightarrow \neg q$ cannot be sound together:

Suppose that (both $p \rightarrow q$ and $p \rightarrow \neg q$ are sound).
If $(p \rightarrow \neg q)$ is sound, then $(q \rightarrow \neg p)$ is sound. by contraposition

nantoni (ed.), *Lo scetticismo antico* (Naples, 1981), 501–32; 'Stopper on Nasti's Contention and Stoic Logic', *Phronesis*, 29 (1984), 313–24; 'Stoic Implication and Stoic Modalities', in G. Corsi, C. Mangione, and M. Mugnai (eds.), *Le teorie della modalità* (Bologna, 1989), 258–63; 'La validità del condizionale crisippeo in Sesto Empirico e Boezio (Parte I)' ['Condizionale crisippeo I'], *Dianoia*, 3 (1998), 45–75; 'La validità del condizionale crisippeo in Sesto Empirico e Boezio (Parte II)' ['Condizionale crisippeo II'], ibid. 4 (1999), 11–43.

[108] See Arist. *Pr. An.* 2. 4, $57^{a}36$–$^{b}17$.

If $(p \rightarrow q)$ and $(q \rightarrow \neg p)$ are sound, then
$(p \rightarrow \neg p)$ is sound. by transitivity
But $(p \rightarrow \neg p)$ is not sound. by the definition of *συνάρτησις*
Therefore, ¬(both $p \rightarrow q$ and $p \rightarrow \neg q$ are sound).[109]

But, from this, it is plain that the *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν* cannot be sound. Even more important, as William Kneale noticed, in a logical system containing (*AT*) 'there could never be any valid argument in the pattern of the *consequentia mirabilis*';[110] and it seems that the same is to be said for a logic in which the truth conditions for conditionals involve *συνάρτησις*.

It is possible that we have arrived at an explanation for the absence, indicated above, of the *Mirabilis* from ancient texts: it seems that both Aristotelian and Chrysippean logic have features which make the *Mirabilis* and other arguments in the same pattern unsound.[111] And we must be careful to avoid the blunder of considering such features logical *mistakes*; classical sentential calculus is not *the* logic, and there exist many interesting alternative systems which have different logical goals and which reject as invalid important formulae of classical calculus. Some systems of twentieth-century logicians, usually classified under the name of 'relevance logic', have been compared with Stoic syllogistic;[112] in particular, Storrs McCall, by developing a system based on a concept of 'connexive implication' stronger than material and strict implication, has

[109] Apart from the definition of *συνάρτησις*, this proof requires only one's acceptance of the laws of transitivity and contraposition, and there is good evidence that these principles were accepted by the Stoics.

[110] W. Kneale, 'Aristotle and the *Consequentia Mirabilis*', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), 62–6 at 65.

[111] If we accept McPherran's interpretation, the final argument of *M.* 8 works only on the assumption that (1) the dogmatist does not consider from the beginning the self-refuting character of the PAP and that (2) following Sextus' lead, he condones 'extreme psychological flexibility in respect of our usual determination to maintain diachronic belief-consistency': 'one *can* assent first to "*p*" ("This is a sound proof") and then to "not-*p*" ("This is not a sound proof") without "cancelling" the memory of one's having previously assented to "*p*" or erasing the intellectual consequences of that assent' ('Homeopathy', 316). My overall interpretation, if correct, has shown that the first condition does not need to be fulfilled. These remarks on the *Mirabilis* might now make the second demand unnecessary too: the final assent to not-*p* does not erase the intellectual consequences of having assented to *p*, simply because it cannot be used as a proof that the previous assent was an error, i.e. that *p* was false, and likewise all its logical consequences. And this does not happen in virtue of the *Sceptics*' own view of logic and argument, but because of certain features of *Stoic* dialectic.

[112] See e.g. Bobzien, 'Stoic Syllogistic', 185–6.

given up the classical law of simplification, the paradoxical theses *Ex falso quodlibet* and *Ex impossibili quodlibet* and the *Consequentia Mirabilis*, those very theses of which no trace can be found in our sources for Stoic logic.[113]

None the less, we should refrain from considering Stoic logic nothing but an illustrious ancestor of modern relevance logic, and from feeling certain that the *Mirabilis* and any other argument in the same pattern were unsound for the Stoics. The fact, certified by our sources, that arguments like the διὰ δύο τροπικῶν, or the constructive dilemma seen on p. 298, were employed by the Stoics cannot be overlooked, and some adequate explanation is therefore demanded for the inconsistency between such usage and the adoption of Chrysippean συνάρτησις as we understand it. One could suggest that the Stoics simply were unaware of the danger, and wholly guilty of the inconsistency in question, even if attributing such a blunder to them seems rather outrageous;[114] or that in the problematic arguments we are interested in the underlying analysis of conditionals is not necessarily συνάρτησις, but perhaps, for example, Philonian implication;[115] or, again, that adopting συνάρτησις does not in reality

[113] See S. McCall, 'Connexive Implication', *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, 31 (1966), 415–33; 'Connexive Implication and the Syllogism', *Mind*, 76 (1967), 346–56.

[114] In support of this possibility, however, one could say that Aristotle too might have fallen into a similar inconsistency: 'Did Aristotle ever consider in abstraction the pattern of inference which he had used in his *Protrepticus*? And did he realise when he wrote his *Prior Analytics* that the passage I have quoted [*Pr. An.* 2. 4, $57^{a}36$–$^{b}17$, in which Aristotle argues for the incompossibility of $p \rightarrow q$ and $\neg p \rightarrow q$ on the basis of (*AT*)] involved rejection of that pattern?' (Kneale, 'Aristotle and the *Consequentia Mirabilis*', 66).

For a different, but related, inconsistency the Stoics were possibly guilty of because of their adoption of συνάρτησις see Barnes, 'Proof Destroyed', 175.

[115] Some interesting remarks against this possibility have been advanced by Martha Kneale: 'When a follower of Zeno wishes to refute some common assumption that-P, he produces an argument of the form "If P, then Q; and if P, then not-Q; therefore it is impossible that-P". In this context he cannot assert his conditionals on the sole ground that they satisfy Philo's requirement. Admittedly he believes that their common antecedent is false, which is enough to guarantee the truth of both according to Philo's criterion; but he puts them forward as premises in an argument to *prove* the falsity of the antecedent, and he must therefore expect his opponent to concede them for some reason which is independent of the truth or falsity of the antecedent or the consequent' (W. C. Kneale and M. Kneale, *The Development of Logic* (Oxford, 1962), 131). On the contrary, Nasti maintains that Chrysippus' logic was not a logic of pure Chrysippean implication, i.e. that it included three distinct analyses of the conditional: weak (the Philonian one), intermediate (something similar to our strict implication), and strong (συνάρτησις). According to Nasti, Sextus' argument against the dogmatic dilemma in favour of proof rests exactly on an erroneous interpretation of Chrysippus' logic as a logic of pure συνάρτησις: it is true that

undermine the validity of those arguments (one could argue, for example, that, given the mere definition of *συνάρτησις*, nothing prevents a necessary falsehood from implying its own contradictory, or a necessary truth from being implied by its own contradictory, since necessary falsehoods, or at least some of them, might be said to conflict with themselves).[116]

Any investigation of these issues should be guided by awareness that Stoic dialectic is not a monolith, and cannot be identified with Chrysippean dialectic *tout court*. Arguments which may have been unsound for Chrysippus could have been adopted as perfectly genuine proofs by later Stoics,[117] and employed as powerful weapons against the Sceptics; it was by no means necessary that *συνάρτησις* be embraced by every Stoic over a period of four centuries or more.[118] Any attempt at tracing such historical distinctions is made extremely hard, if not impossible, by the scantiness of the extant testimonies for Stoic logic; but such difficulties as ours must not lead us to postulate an alternative, easier, but deeply inexact, image of Stoic logic as an immutable and

that argument is invalid if one interprets *all* the conditionals involved (including conditionalization) as *συναρτήσεις*, but actually Chrysippus himself intended intermediate conditionals for premisses and Philonian conditional for conditionalization, which makes the argument perfectly sound (see 'Condizionale crisippeo II', 35–41). I think there are reasons for rejecting Nasti's interesting proposal, but I cannot take them into account in the present discussion.

[116] This possibility of self-conflict, which seems to be espoused by Mates (*Stoic Logic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961), 50 n. 36), has been rejected by Nasti ('Condizionale crisippeo I', 49), but by employing the debatable thesis [B] seen above.

[117] Antipater is usually indicated as the violator *par excellence* of orthodoxy in Stoic logic (for his acceptance, for example, of *μονολήμματοι λόγοι*). I wonder whether such an orthodoxy is not mostly a historiographical construction. Consider this interesting passage from Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (2. 3. 18–19): 'Now, you can meet people minutely skilled in the ways of analysing the *διὰ δύο τροπικῶν* syllogisms, the *διὰ τριῶν τροπικῶν* syllogisms . . . And anyway, all the construction of such syllogisms is no small over-expenditure of effort on something useless, as Chrysippus himself testifies in practice by never in his own works needing those syllogisms to demonstrate a doctrine.' Is Galen saying that Chrysippus knew, and endorsed, the arguments mentioned, but never felt the necessity to use them in the practice of demonstrating his philosophical tenets? Or that he never took into consideration such arguments? Or, perhaps, that Chrysippus did not employ them because he considered them unsound?

[118] See Barnes, 'Proof Destroyed', 170: 'It may well be that some Stoics flirted with rival analyses of the conditional.' For Nasti's stronger idea that not only later Stoic logic, but also Chrysippean logic, was not a logic of pure *συνάρτησις* see above, n. 115.

compact whole, without internal conflicts, changes, and developments.

These sketchy remarks on the soundness of the AAPs' περιγραφή argument do not pretend to be exhaustive, and so much the less definitive; my primary purpose here was to show (against the standard reading) how that argument is supposed to work, and not to decide how well it works. What I wanted to make clear is that any correct interpretation and evaluation of Sextus' argument is possible only within the boundaries of ancient dialectic, by refraining carefully from the anachronistic application of modern logical categories. It is in ancient logic, and in particular in Hellenistic and Imperial Stoic logic, that we should look for an answer to the question whether the dogmatist really has at his disposal the necessary tools to defuse that argument, or whether the Pyrrhonist's strategy is not only refined, but also surprisingly effective in undermining the dogmatist's confidence in the existence of proof.

Leaving this question open to further reflections and researches, I think it will not be superfluous to lay down a final clarification about the double role (defensive and 'offensive') which I have attributed to the περιγραφή argument as it is built in the final section of *Against the Logicians*. We have seen in Section 3 that the protagonist of that passage is the Pyrrhonist; it is the Pyrrhonist who grasps the second horn of the dogmatist's dilemma (though only for dialectical purposes), and thus gets involved in the self-bracketing of the AAP. And self-bracketing allows him to resist the charge of self-refutation (defensive role) and, at the same time, to be persuaded (to a certain degree) of the non-existence of proof. It is the Pyrrhonist who uses the ladder of the AAP (making of it *ex hypothesi* a PAP) to ascend to a ὑψηλὸς τόπος, and then overturns it with his foot; no mention at all is made of the dogmatist. Where, then, is the 'offensive' side of the περιγραφή argument supposed to lie? Again: we know that the Pyrrhonist claims to be *already* in a (presumably high) condition of ἐποχή about the existence of proof, being persuaded with equal force by the AAPs and by the dogmatic arguments in favour of proof. Where is the ladder supposed to take him, then, when in the dialectical game he consents to subscribe to the second horn of his adversary's dilemma? And how does the dogmatist enter into the picture?

The ancient Pyrrhonists—Sextus reveals to us—are not only skilled argument-makers; they 'are philanthropic and wish to cure

by argument, as far as they can, the conceit and rashness of the dogmatists' (*PH* 3. 280). The Pyrrhonist is already in the healthy and untroubled condition of ἐποχή, but from such high ground he does not confine himself to scornfully gazing at his adversary, stuck in the wretched lowlands of Dogmatism; he chooses to go downhill, just for a few moments, and to show the dogmatist the way to leave that unhealthy place.

The dogmatist, poisoned by his own dogmatism, strongly believes that proof exists, but at the same time is in the awkward position of being unable to find any argument to establish that the dangerous AAPs are not genuine proofs.[119] The Pyrrhonist, philanthropically descending from his ὑψηλὸς τόπος,[120] shows him what presumably he himself realized (and put into practice) some time before: if they cannot be defused, the AAPs can be used as a ladder, safe enough to scale the dogmatic walls and climb to a higher place, where persuasion of the non-existence of proof will finally counterbalance the opposite belief in its existence, leading the dogmatist to ἐποχή. It is a ladder that can be overturned as soon as the summit has been reached, without hesitation or regrets.[121]

What for the Pyrrhonist is only the last, brilliant move in the dialectical play could represent for the dogmatist the first, crucial step towards mental health and Pyrrhonism.

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[119] As seen above, it is an open question whether he could or not. It is likely that the difficulty of finding out some argument to defuse the AAPs is a source of mental disturbance (ταραχή) for the dogmatist.

[120] That is the counterpart of the Pyrrhonist's choice of the second horn of the dogmatist's dilemma ('The AAP is a proof') for dialectical purposes (actually the Pyrrhonist suspends his judgement about the existence of proof and the demonstrativeness of the AAP itself, and therefore stands in a high place). Clearly the descent of the Pyrrhonist, being only a dialectical and pedagogical move, does not cause him to fall back into any form of dogmatism.

[121] As for most similes, the correspondence between the comparanda is not complete (and this probably contributes to making the use of similes so interesting and rewarding). Just one question: why does Sextus say that *it is the Sceptic* who overturns the ladder? The AAPs, when taken as proofs, *necessarily* do away with themselves; the ladder *has* to fall down, independently of the will of the Sceptic (who, anyway, would have no reason for being eager to keep it).

RUMMAGING IN THE RECYCLING BINS OF UPPER EGYPT

A Discussion of A. Martin and O. Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg*[1]

CATHERINE OSBORNE

FEW interested parties in the scholarly world of ancient philosophy will, by this stage, be unaware of the story behind Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi's publication. It has been hot news, and the publication eagerly awaited, ever since the announcement in 1994 that a papyrus on which Alain Martin was working, under the auspices of the Bibliothèque Nationale and University of Strasburg, had been identified as containing verses of Empedocles, some of them almost certainly previously unknown. Nevertheless—since there seems no better opening for a reflection on the significance of this discovery and on the value of its elegant publication—I propose to begin by summarizing what I take to be most important among the undisputed facts before proceeding to ask how they affect our understanding of Empedocles and of what we are doing with texts when we study the Presocratics.

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I have benefited from discussions with David Sedley, Oliver Primavesi, Myles Burnyeat, and participants at the Southern Association for Ancient Philosophy meeting 1999, and I am also grateful for detailed written comments from Myles Burnyeat and Oliver Primavesi that have helped me to eliminate a number of inaccuracies. The offences that remain are my own responsibility.

[1] Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg* (*P.Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665–1666*): *Introduction, édition et commentaire*, with an English Summary (Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg; Walter de Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 1999), pp. xi + 396, 6 pp. of plates.

1. The story so far

The Strasburg Papyrus was originally acquired by the German Archaeologist Otto Rubensohn in Upper Egypt in 1904, but had lain in storage under glass for years, still unidentified, before being assigned to Alain Martin for attention in 1990. When purchased, it had apparently still retained the form of a gilded death coronet stuck about with copper leaves—apparently part of the funerary adornment of a mummy for burial in Roman Egypt. Folded sheets of papyrus seem to have formed the base of this coronet, which is not exactly paralleled in any surviving material.

The details need not concern us here: suffice to say that the effect of folding the papyrus, concertina fashion, into a paper crown had been to crease it in roughly parallel lines running vertically down the columns of text, but not allowing a whole line to be preserved unfolded; and after the coronet was pulled apart to reveal the written text, it seems, the construction must have simply fallen apart at the seams. What remained for Martin to work on when he came to it in 1990 were 52 pieces ranging in size from chunks large enough to contain several whole words on several consecutive lines to tiny scraps with part of a letter showing. Were these all the bits? Had they once come from a single folded sheet or from two or more sheets cut from the same roll? Should they join up and, if so, which bits join on to which? Such were Martin's first tasks and the publication details how he and his specialist collaborator sought to answer these questions, in the light both of physical evidence in the papyrus itself and also of the text it had once borne, some lines of which can be matched up with the quotations known from later writers.

2. Physical remains and philosophical interpretation

Of course, the issue of just what the physical arrangement of the bits should be is inextricably bound up with the issue of what the text once said; and the issue of what the text once said is inextricably bound up with the interpreter's parameters for what she conceives to be a plausible doctrine for Empedocles to maintain, and in what context. Thus one cannot hope first to reconstruct the physical

remains of this papyrus and then use it to supplement or correct what is known from elsewhere, for although it can help to solve certain cruces in the known fragments of Empedocles, it can only do so once we can attach its phrases to the required context; and for that we need some idea of how Empedocles' doctrine hung together.

This brings me to my first observation about methodology with respect to papyrus evidence such as this, namely that we should avoid naïvely supposing that, as 'direct' evidence, it is accessible without presupposing an interpretation, in a way that indirect evidence is not. Not that this volume is guilty of that assumption, for the editors are well aware of their debts; nor is there anything wrong with invoking an interpretation in support of the reconstruction. On the contrary, I would claim that that is not only inevitable but the correct procedure. Quite rightly, this volume does not just describe the physical remains and speculate on their provenance, but also explores the knotty disputes in contemporary Empedoclean studies and speculates on how the papyrus evidence fits in. Thus, while I shall, in what follows, raise doubts of my own about the conclusions that are defended, I believe that the methodological approach is correct; only occasionally is the status of the evidence or its place in future scholarship overstated. I shall return to this later.

Yet while the independence of supposedly direct testimony should not be overrated, there is another point to be made here: in fact, the significance of this papyrus extends far beyond its provision of what looks, at first, like a few new (though rarely remarkable or unfamiliar) words, and six or seven almost complete lines not exactly known from earlier material—but very much like what we had already. In quantity of new material the find is not enormous, nor will it make the text section of an edition of Empedocles much fatter.[2] But it is just because the lines it repeats or re-echoes are the very lines on which we have, for years, hung our competing interpretations, and because, if we can trust its text, and if the sequence of lines is uninterrupted and authentic, it appears to confirm some of the most radical hypotheses in recent Empedocles scholarship,

[2] Traces of at least 74 hexameter lines are preserved; 25 show definite points of contact with lines previously known. Twenty appear to be exactly the lines we know. The other 49 do not, however, provide 49 new verses of Empedocles, since few can be reconstructed. In many, small groups of letters and faint traces of lost strokes are supplemented by guesswork—precise, meticulous, and expert, but guesswork none the less—using standard hexameter formulae and parallels in other poets.

and to leave some long-established accounts writhing in contortions of special pleading, that its chief effect will be to multiply the pages devoted to making sense of Empedocles, doubtless for years to come.

There are, naturally, doubts about the details of how the bits were once joined up. Much is speculation and occasionally the conclusions for which Martin and Primavesi settle struck me as the opposite of what I was expecting—almost as if they had set out to suggest one option and then perversely opted for the reverse instead, though this effect must result from giving greater attention to possible counter-arguments than to evidence that actually favoured their position. Nothing is seriously doubtful about the grouping of the pieces into six ensembles and five isolated pieces: this results in four ensembles (labelled **a** to **d**) that provide the most substantial and readable sequences of lines—substantial and readable because many can be supplemented at their missing ends from the indirect tradition. But the questions that follow—how, if at all, would these groups have joined up? do they all come from the same context? which work do they come from and is just one book of that work represented among the scraps? was the coronet made from papyrus chosen specially for its content or from randomly recycled material?—these questions are all closely tied to what we think is going on in the texts, and to our broader picture of Empedocles' doctrine; and the answers to these questions have dramatic repercussions on what conclusions we can draw from the papyrus.

What, for example, do we know about the choice of papyrus strips for the death coronet? The two main alternatives are: (1) that they were waste paper from a source unconnected with burial rites or the beliefs of the deceased; or (2) that they were chosen deliberately from texts that he or she had loved and believed, or that had belonged to a community to which the deceased was ritually committed. Martin and Primavesi conclude that the strips were secular waste paper recycled in a workshop mass-producing funerary equipment—such recycling of cast-off papyrus is well attested for papier mâché constructs such as mummy-cases—and this certainly leaves open the possibility that they were cut from one original roll, that the roll might have been a complete scholarly copy of Empedocles' poem (not excerpts), that the identical lettering throughout reflects a single professional scribe at work on one or more sections of the same roll, and that the choice of excerpts was neither directly

nor indirectly influenced by the customs, beliefs, or philosophical concerns of late Roman Egypt. Nothing here makes us suspect that the text has been systematically corrupted or adapted (though of course it does not preclude it).

Clearly this hypothesis is the happier conclusion for anyone who hopes for 'clean' evidence or seeks to maintain a strict dichotomy between the direct evidence of a papyrus and the indirect evidence of later writers whose beliefs and interpretations affect their choice of material. For one moment it seems that Martin and Primavesi are looking for that kind of confidence. 'Ce contact immédiat, sans citateur pour s'interposer, pour adapter, remodeler ou découper le texte, constitue une chance exceptionnelle,' they say on p. 101. But oddly, they first drew this conclusion at the end of a section (pp. 36–8) that presented a series of near parallels that, to the innocent eye, look like evidence for the opposite conclusion, namely that finding these verses on a funerary ornament might be *not* accidental, but comparable to known burials—not only the Derveni example, but Egyptian ones too—where Orphic texts, scrolls of Alcman, Homer, and so on are found in the hand or mouth of the deceased.[3] The reversal of this argument on p. 38 appears inadequately supported, as though it rested solely on one purported parallel (a papyrus-clad wooden coronet recorded, also by Rubensohn, from Abousir el-Meleq, but now unfortunately lost) which reputedly bore a documentary text, and hence apparently proves (a case of) the random use of recycled secular papyrus sheets on the closest comparable product.[4]

Would it matter whether the papyrus was randomly recycled or specially chosen for its significance? Arguably it would not, for even on the latter alternative, a complete sound scholarly text might have been used. Yet the more we entertain the idea that it meant something to the wearer, the more we invite the possibility that the work had been selected and adapted for a community in which Empedocles was revered for reasons we might consider anachronistic, and the more we collapse the distinction between the authors from

[3] In most of these the complete scroll is buried with the deceased and it seems intuitively implausible that one would cut up a favourite text into strips. The editors need to stress the significance of this difference. Yet the waste paper might still derive from a worn-out and recently replaced text from the household or religious group.

[4] Rubensohn recognized what he took to be a sale agreement for a house (but cf. Martin's verdict, p. 28 n. 5, that we cannot securely decipher the text given the letters recorded).

whom we cull the fragments of the indirect tradition and a papyrus which might have collected verses of Empedocles for some purpose not wholly dissimilar, but of whose prejudices and interests we are even less distinctly aware.[5]

That question, whether the papyrus served a religious role accidentally or not, has little direct effect on the interpretation of Empedocles, since even had we concluded that the choice was deliberate, we should have got no further with discovering the basis of selection. But suppose we conclude, with the authors, that what we have comes randomly from what was once a complete text of some work of Empedocles: the next question cannot, I believe, be answered without reference to an interpretation of the text and decisions on the probable structure of Empedocles' presentation of his doctrine, and indeed on the structure of the world that he described and our place in it. Much as we might like to determine whether ensembles **a–c** belong to the same context as ensemble **d** on purely physical and textual grounds from within the papyrus, I am convinced that in practice nothing there will decide the question absolutely. True, the letters are slightly less compact in ensemble **d** (though obviously still in the same hand) and, true, the manner of entering variants above the line is different,[6] but neither of these entails that we are dealing with a different book of Empedocles. Perhaps the obvious expectation would be that the scraps came a few columns apart in the same general context, the variations in appearance being due to trivial discrepancies in the scribe's lettering and chance circumstances affecting which passages happened to have been checked for variant readings. However, Martin and Primavesi now reject this hypothesis (which some will remember being canvassed at preliminary reports of their earlier work) in favour of the suggestion that **a** and **d** represent quite distant passages; in fact they

[5] The alternative of a collection of extracts from Empedocles is discussed and rejected on p. 100; nevertheless, the presence of a *παράγραφος* between lines 4 and 5 of ensemble **f** (where we can read at most the first three letters of each line and hence cannot be sure that the dividing mark merely marks off a simile starting with the words *ὡς δ*[, readable at the start of **f 5**, as the editors guess) tells against dismissing this too easily. Indeed, we have no idea whether this *παράγραφος* was the only one in the sequence of lines on the papyrus, for in only fifteen lines is the left end of the line and left margin preserved, eight of those in ensemble **f**, where the remaining *παράγραφος* appears.

[6] The difference is in the style (variants are placed between dots in ensemble **d**) and in the hands, but notably *not* in the kind of correction, for in both ensembles **a–c** and ensemble **d** there are characteristic examples of a doubt over reading *θ* or *ν* in middle/active first-person plurals: more on this below.

argue that whereas ensemble **a** is from book 1 of the work cited by Simplicius as *Physics*, ensemble **d**, by contrast, came well into what Simplicius knew as book 2. Their thesis is that one roll contained what in other exemplars (including that used by Simplicius, presumably) was normally divided into two rolls, books 1 and 2;[7] then a systematic collation with another copy containing only book 2 would explain why variant readings are noted in a distinctive style for that book alone. This explanation is mooted as early as p. 8 of the introduction and seems to be preferred over any alternative; indeed, the only alternative offered, to receive a rather swift dismissal, is that the pieces derive from two consecutive rolls containing the two books separately (p. 8 n. 3). Once again the introduction seems to skimp on the defence for this deeply counter-intuitive thesis, while the simpler solution, that it all comes from one book, looks to be prematurely dismissed. Why?

Since nothing in the handwriting or physical appearance excludes it, the decisive factors must be extracted from how the text is reconstructed and interpreted. Two factors figure in this case: one is how events could in principle turn out to be ordered in Empedocles' work; the other is the apparent cross-reference identifiable in ensemble **d.** Primavesi considers the latter factor decisive, since he takes it to be virtually undeniable that the cross-reference is to fr. 62, which accordingly preceded ensemble **d.**[8] Since Simplicius found fr. 62 in *Physics* book 2, it would then follow that ensemble **d** came from book 2, if not later, and not the beginning of book 2 either.

Nevertheless, this reconstruction seems to me less than secure. I find the purported recapitulation of fr. 62 unusually faint and vague when compared with Empedocles' normal habit of reciting almost identical words; here by contrast a different expression is employed for every participant in the drama: for instance, 'fire' appears as πῦρ in fr. 62, φ[λογ]μός, assuming the supplement is right, in **d 11.** To identify the participants as the same items, and the events as the same events (rather than, say, the converse events at the opposite phase of a cycle), requires a considerable input of interpretation. Thus, although **d 10** does imply that Empedocles is

[7] Parallels for a single roll containing two books are known for the shorter books of Homer—though the practice is rather less well attested in the Roman period than would be desirable to render this thesis wholly convincing (p. 11 n. 6).

[8] I use Diels–Kranz fragment numbers here and throughout.

repeating (or anticipating)[9] a section of the tale told elsewhere, we need not suppose that the earlier version must be among the lines extant in our editions today, or, if it is, that the lines in question are those of fr. 62.[10]

For Primavesi, the main pressure to place ensemble **d** in book 2 may indeed come from the alleged reminiscence of an earlier treatment of the same topic; but what is that topic? To speak of the same topic we need some way of identifying phases of the cycle. The rising flame mentioned in **d** needs to be identified: was there one or more than one such event, and how many times would Empedocles have mentioned it before the allusion in ensemble **d**? To answer these questions we need to know how many phases there were and which were described first. My point is this: we surely cannot reach a verdict on the physical reconstruction without some theory about the doctrine.

In their book, Martin and Primavesi summarize their proposed reading of the cosmic cycle *before* they give their text and the detailed commentary that spells out the minutiae of the evidence; but plainly they cannot have chosen that cosmic theory before examining the textual evidence (both new and old) or settled the details of the text before seeing whether a coherent and defensible cosmic sequence was possible with the reconstruction proposed. Either procedure would disable one of the two contributing sources of understanding. Clearly they are right that we need, in defence of the proposed text, a survey of the competing theories in the scholarly literature and a summary of the theory that is thought to fit best. My quibble is not with that procedure, but with the outcome, which seems to me to show some strain in the fit, and to be somehow constrained by inherited preconceptions that have not been fully exposed to questions posed by the more unexpected features of this text. It is with an enviable degree of confidence that Primavesi commits himself to a complete and detailed order of cosmic events, with four stages of zoogony precisely distributed over two distinct worlds. But the confidence seems to me partly to reflect a continued confidence in familiar preconceptions established in the

[9] This seductive alternative was suggested by David Sedley at a symposium in Oxford, Sept. 1999, pointing out that *αὖθις* in **d 10** (quoted below, p. 347) might mean 'later' rather than, as the editors take it, 'again'.

[10] The exact wording of the cross-reference is in doubt, and I am doubtful that the editors are right to reject a text that was apparently sound in the first hand in favour of a faulty one in the corrector's hand. More on the details below.

classic work of Denis O'Brien, preconceptions which have guided much traditional work in the twentieth century, but which belong to a period when Empedocles was read in compartments, when the *Physics* was taken to be a work of natural philosophy whose sole aim was to set out a sequence of mechanical cosmic events, and when there could be no point to Empedocles' message unless it settled the details of an elaborate pluralist response to Parmenides.

As alternatives to the double cosmogony/double zoogony structure favoured by O'Brien, Primavesi surveys, but ultimately rejects, first the non-cosmological interpretation of U. Hölscher, and secondly the various single cosmogony/single zoogony models defended by F. Solmsen and A. A. Long in the 1960s and early 1970s, and by Schofield in 1983. All these seem to me to be variations on the same mechanistic view of the universe. Surely it would have been more helpful, given the striking evidence in the new papyrus for a complete cohesion of demonology and cosmology, had Primavesi paid rather more attention, in this essential ground-clearing section of his discussion, to assessing the merits of recent interpretations of the cosmic sequence; because it is in the past fifteen years that scholars have been experimenting with the idea, clearly confirmed by this papyrus, that physical doctrines and religious tales were deeply and formatively intertwined. Sadly, although Primavesi discusses the work of some of these scholars in his section concerning the titles of Empedocles' work,[11] they do not figure in his discussion of the cosmic cycle.[12]

This omission is, to my mind, quite unfortunate. This is not because we needed to have the appropriate reading of the cosmology repeated or rehearsed for us here, but because the *physical* reconstruction of the papyrus will inevitably be constrained by attempting to retain preconceptions of a doctrinal thesis that arguably cannot fit. Primavesi identifies the periods of the cosmic cycle by

[11] e.g. N. Van Der Ben, *The Proem of Empedocles'* Peri Physios (Amsterdam, 1975); id., 'Empedocles' Cycle and Fragment 17. 3–5', *Hermes*, 112 (1984), 281–96; Catherine Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled' *Classical Quarterly*, NS 37 (1987), 24–50; David Sedley, 'The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 30 (1989), 269–96, updated as ch. 1 of his *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998); Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles* (Phoenix Presocratics, 3; Toronto, 1992).

[12] Not all of these works proposed radical revisions to the cosmology. My project, in the article cited above and in *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy*, was primarily to rehabilitate Hippolytus' unified interpretation of Empedocles, against the mechanistic cosmic cycles of 20th-cent. scholarship.

constructing a diagram (p. 96) that shows a circle—fittingly since the story is to be cyclic. The Sphairos, unified under love, is placed at twelve o'clock, and, tentatively, a *δῖνος* at six o'clock. Moving round clockwise, the right side of the circle is a period of increasing disunity and strife, the left a period of increasing unity and love. It would be usual on a clock to begin numbering from the top right and continue in order round to twelve o'clock: that way we should think of increasing strife as the first half of a cycle and increasing love as the second, as though a cycle started and finished with love's unity at twelve o'clock. Pictorially the diagram invites us to think that way; but there is a tension between that symbolism and the numbering and lettering on the diagram: Primavesi calls the left side of the clock 'World A' and the right side 'World B', as though a rotation started and finished at six o'clock; similarly, the zoogonical stages on the left side are numbered stage 1 and stage 2, those on the right stage 3 and stage 4, as though a biological sequence started and finished at six o'clock. However innocently this numbering of the stages is adopted from a sequence of zoogonical stages listed in pseudo-Plutarch (Aetius),[13] it is, of course, no guide to the plan of Empedocles' writings. Six o'clock is no more a starting-point on the diagram than twelve o'clock is, if the cycle is continuous. World A is no more the first in time than world B is. Yet Empedocles must have chosen some starting-point to begin his tale. What is more, we now have a shrewd idea that what he started with was material long known from Hippolytus and Plutarch, reconstructed to form fr. 115, which apparently tells of the destruction of love's unity at the outbreak of strife, initiating a period of banishment for the *daimones* and of plurality in the physical world.[14] In the poem, apparently, history begins with what is rather misleadingly labelled 'World B' on Primavesi's diagram, starting not at six o'clock, with stage 1, but at twelve o'clock, with stage 3.

So what? Primavesi does not say or imply that the poem started with stage 1 or with world A. Indeed, he thinks that fr. 115 did actually recount world B and did occur in the proem of book 1. But

[13] 31 A 72 DK. Empedocles' own recurrent couplets tend to summarize the cosmic cycle in this order (e.g. fr. 17. 1–2).

[14] Plutarch claims, *De exilio* 17, that these verses were the beginning of Empedocles' philosophy. They were assigned to an alternative poem, owing to their apparently mystical subject-matter, so long as there was a consensus that the physics excluded such themes. That assumption is now widely discredited and, as the editors acknowledge (p. 119), this papyrus adds further testimony.

now it follows that if (as proposed) ensemble **d** cross-references to a woeful stage when strife was breaking out anew, the stage to which it alludes is the woeful story with which the poem opened. It seems to me that if that is kept clearly in mind, despite the unhelpful numbering on Primavesi's diagram, then the argument for placing ensemble **d** after fr. 62 is not strong enough to bear the weight that is applied to it. For the woeful story had already been told at the start of the proem, and perhaps in several further recapitulations, before and after fr. 62.[15] World B appeared first, and **d** could look back to it no matter where in the poem it was located.

Let it not be thought that Primavesi denies this. On the contrary, he holds, as I do, that rising strife would have figured in book 1, not only in fr. 115, but also in ensemble **c** (in which he finds references to both worlds, I only to rising strife). But enumerating zoogonical stages from the return of love confuses the issue and constrains the options envisaged for even the basic structure of cosmic stages round the clock.

It is uncontroversial, for example, that rising strife emerges from a determinate beginning, namely the Sphere that figures at twelve o'clock on Primavesi's clock. But if I am right, world A, the struggle to restore love's unity, should not have a determinate beginning in the way that world B starts from total unity. However, by counting the cosmic stages from six o'clock one artificially creates the search for the state at six o'clock: what is the world like when stage 1 begins? Reflection on this question reveals some contrasting patterns in the cosmic cycles outlined by different schools of thought this century, which identify two apparently incompatible candidates for that state at six o'clock: on one alternative four elements are separated in vast cosmic masses, but no life-forms have yet emerged (a model favourable to a single zoogony); on the other, life-forms have once been formed and subsequently torn apart, resulting in a lifeless residue of detached parts (favouring a double zoogony).

I believe this is a false dichotomy, arising from the expectation that the point at which the tables are turned and love starts to return correlates with a certain degree of disunity, invariably the same degree in every cycle. Thus the pressure comes not just from starting with the so-called zoogony 'stage 1', but also from sup-

[15] I have explored Empedocles' manner of cyclical composition in 'Was Verse the Default Form for Presocratic Philosophy?', in Catherine Atherton (ed.), *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry* (Bari, 1998) 23–35.

posing that the elements and compounds that make up the plural world are inanimate matter pushed about by mechanical forces of cohesion and division. On this model, there would have to be some pre-set target to which the mechanical forces were directed and which they inevitably attained before the tables were automatically turned.

Even when faced with the task of integrating *daimones* into the cosmic cycle, Primavesi does not see that this mechanical model is ripe for questioning. Ostensibly it makes love and strife the agents in the history of the cosmos, but they are conceived as physical lumps of stuff which obey predetermined patterns of expansion and contraction in the manner of physical laws of nature, while the elements and mortals remain inert conglomerations of matter shunted together and apart in a lottery machine. Primavesi retains the lumps of stuff (he asks where love is located when completely driven out by strife), but to meet the now increasingly evident need to accommodate *daimones* as agents in the cosmos, he takes love as the only suitable quasi-agent supplied by this model, and identifies the *daimones* with 'fragments of love'.[16]

Thus Primavesi adopts a theory whereby, before the restoration of the sphere, scattered particles of an extended stuff called love must first be extracted into a central location—adding what seems to me an otiose step in an otherwise simple alternation of one and many.[17] Yet we can see the motivation for doing so, since Primavesi concedes, to my mind rightly, that the papyrus coincides with other strands of ancient evidence in attributing some voluntary agency to choices whereby we, *qua daimones*, can precipitate alterations in our own fate and that of the world as a whole, and ultimately escape from the dominance of strife. It is not just that it seems hard to reconstruct **a (ii) 17,** μ̣ε̣σά̣τους [sc. *τόπους*] τ̣' [ε̣ἰ̣σ̣η]ρ̣χ̣όμ̣εθ' ἓ̣ν μ̣[*όνον εἶναι*, without supposing that 'we', the subject of the verb, must be distinct from some neuter-plural entities that appear to be mentioned in the third person in lines 5 and perhaps 16, but that

[16] These bits of love are not an innovation on Primavesi's part: they figure in some earlier work, including O'Brien. Indeed, although I would claim that they are a compromise slotted into an outmoded mechanistic picture, they were still countenanced by Inwood in 1992.

[17] It is not that I deny that friendship spreads out from the centre, as mentioned in fr. 35, but that I deny that there is a preceding process of gathering bits of stuff together into the centre, since I deny that friendship is a stuff.

the whole context demands that we figure as agents in the picture somewhere.[18]

By itself, the difficulty of reconstructing line 17 would not, to my mind, justify an otherwise unmotivated complication of the cycle. On the contrary, we should plainly secure a believable demonology in tandem with a sensible reconstruction of the text. I am not suggesting that Primavesi should have sheltered his reconstruction of the text from any interpretative proposals: far from it. My doubts are simply over the suitability of the models to which he turned for inspiration, and over whether the textual reconstruction of **a (ii) 17** (which I find deeply unconvincing, both as Greek and in the purported sense that it is supposed to bear) should have determined the choice of model so profoundly.

I would diagnose in Primavesi's cosmic cycle more than one relic of the mechanistic model. One is the idea that agency belongs to love and strife, and not to the countless tribes of mortal things, nor to the elements whose hostile or friendly behaviour is to be explained—explained, that is, by their actions being 'in love' or 'in strife'; the other is the idea that there must be *either* one *or* two complete and determinate zoogonical sequences in a cycle. This becomes less obvious once we accept, as Primavesi does in adopting the double zoogony, that strife not only separates but diversifies.[19] Only beyond a certain rather vague degree does further diversification count as destroying, rather than simply complicating, the contents and life-forms of a single world. By combining this insight with the ascription (also acknowledged by Primavesi) of genuine agency to participants in this world, i.e. *daimones*, we can see that the sequence of events becomes indeterminate between one cosmogony and two, or between one zoogony and two; whether the reversal to increasing unity effects a new creation and a new tribe of mortals depends upon whether the world that developed as strife gained a hold had

[18] On the first-person plurals see further below; in addition, the pressure to locate ourselves as agents comes from the presence of fr. 139 in ensemble **d**, and from the warnings of dire distress to come upon, presumably, ourselves (on a plausible reconstruction of **d**).

[19] The distinction between separation, disaggregation, diversification, and alienation as alternative candidates for the primary effect of strife is not clearly drawn, and although this does not seriously undermine the account, it leaves it less clear than it might how the double zoogony model (which has to assume diversification as the result of strife) differs from the single zoogony model, which takes separation to be the work of strife and diversification to be a result of mixture (the reverse of strife's work and hence due to love).

gone so far towards disunity as to have been utterly destroyed into chaos.[20] If it is up to us when the six o'clock reversal is effected, then it is up to us what state the world has got into by then.[21] If, as Primavesi agrees, a call to shorten the exile, and to reverse a process of alienation leading to misery, is a message detectable in some readable lines in ensemble **d,** then a determinate situation at maximum strife seems to be simply an ill-fitting component of a quite different model.

Let us return to the first point about agency; when Empedocles speaks of action resulting from love or strife, he characteristically uses a dative:

> ἄλλοτε μὲν φιλότητι συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓν ἅπαντα,
> ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ διχ' ἕκαστα φορεύμενα νείκεος ἔχθει.
> (fr. 17. 7–8)

The items that do the moving together or apart are 'all things' (frr. 17. 7–8; 21. 7–8; 22. 5); 'limbs' (fr. 20. 3–4 = **c 4–5**); and other unknown neuter-plural entities (fr. 26. 5–6). They move together or apart, become hateful or attractive to each other, think friendly thoughts and accomplish gentle deeds, and so on 'in friendship' (generally, though not invariably, φιλότης) or 'in strife' (generally, though not invariably, νεῖκος) or occasionally as a result of having been affected by love (fr. 22. 5 ὁμοιωθέντ' Ἀφροδίτῃ). Sometimes friendship is said to be in among the things or inborn in their physical make-up (fr. 17. 21).

Who should we say are the agents in these acts of love? In normal discourse, were we to say that some individuals acted in friendship or in enmity, that would imply that the individuals themselves were responsible for their behaviour, while the reference to love and enmity would characterize their motives, or the hostility or affection governing their choice of action. To say that someone has love built

[20] Note that when fr. 35 says that countless tribes of mortal things pour forth, it does not say that this was the first time, nor that the process starts in a world wholly devoid of mortal things. The account of strife's work and love's return that I am defending here, and my interpretation of fr. 35, are explored more fully in 'Empedocles Recycled', 38–41.

[21] I would deny that this freedom to choose implies any doubt that the reversal will inevitably take place, regularly, i.e. repeatedly, once in every cycle (cf. fr. 35. 3–4 and **a (ii) 18–20**). Ultimately our exile will end, because ultimately someone will start the return of love: that is a prediction guaranteed by a decree of necessity like the inevitability that an act of betrayal will eventually destroy the Sphere under love.

into her physical make-up is to say that she is naturally prone to friendly behaviour. It would follow that to describe a sequence in which individuals behaved alternately in a friendly or hostile manner one would say that they acted first in love and then in strife. We might also say that there were phases when love was the predominant influence, and phases when strife overpowered love. To characterize the changeover period we might say that friendship was gaining a hold over strife, or extending its influence beyond where it had formerly been found. To ask where there was friendship, or how extensive it was, would be to ask how widespread was the practice of acting in a friendly manner, and which individuals manifested that kind of behaviour. To say that an individual had become friendly towards another, we might say that love had got the better of him, or that he had been changed by love so as to feel different towards someone else.

The language I have just used is the language used by Empedocles to describe the alternating cosmic processes and the behaviour of things in the world. It is a way of speaking that leaves the things that engage in the friendly or hostile behaviour as themselves the locus of agency. Indeed, it does not say that there are additional *things* (a thing called love and a thing called strife) located alongside the things that behave in this fashion; love and strife exist and are located just in so far as they are operative in, or revealed in, the behaviour of items that exist and have locations in space. There is, then, no such thing as a fragment of love opting out and making its way to a location apart from the entities in the physical world, or agglomerating with other bits of the same 'stuff'. Far from it: what it means for love to grow more extensive or to encompass more things is for more things to start behaving under the influence of love. Hence the answer to the (rather peculiar and un-Empedoclean) question 'Where is love, when strife rules the world?' will be something like 'Nowhere at all' if there is by then no evidence of any item manifesting friendly inclinations and behaviour, or 'Feebly present in a few isolated followers of Empedocles who, despite all pressure to the contrary, are still committed to a non-violent regime', if the *de facto* limit of strife's conquest is to gain the loyalty of all but a remnant. If Empedocles describes strife spreading its influence out to the edges, or driving love into a corner, we may take this to describe how extensive is the range of things in the world that reveal the influence of strife; indeed, we

should probably envisage a progressive swathe of affected parts of the cosmos shifting outwards from the centre towards the edges.[22]

The manifold items in the physical world—elements, compounds, organic structures—that come together in love and move apart in strife are, then, the agents in Empedocles' cosmos, although a complete list of the explanatory factors that account for the sequence of events clearly needs to include the existence of love and strife, the motivations that alternately drive the behaviour of the agents. As agents capable of friendly or hostile motivation, these elements, compounds, and organic structures provide suitable candidates for the identification of the *daimones*: indeed, I believe that they fit the bill without remainder.[23] Exiled from the Sphere when it disintegrates at the return of strife, these elements and compounds traverse the bitter paths of this world for the entire period of cosmic plurality, coming to be everything in turn as they run through mortal life after mortal life, returning to the Sphere only when their trust in raging strife is finally at an end and they return to a golden age of universal concord.[24] We, then, like other mortals, turn out to be *daimones* and hence agents in the work of love and strife.

3. The mysterious 'we'

I have spoken easily of 'ourselves', in the first-person plural, as agents in the cosmic cycle, and as being identical with the material components—elements, mortal compounds, and limbs—of the divided world initiated by strife. Not surprisingly, I find that easy, since it merely summarizes conclusions that I defended long ago in my earlier work on the cosmic cycle and the banishment of the *daimones*. For me there would be no surprise in finding

[22] This point about the location of love and strife is effectively made by Rosemary Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments* (Yale, 1981), 30–4. The point about agency I argued briefly in 'Empedocles Recycled', 46–7.

[23] Primavesi disagrees because he thinks it is clear that the 'we' in **a (ii) 17** cannot be the neuter things in **a (ii) 16.** I dispute his estimate of the reliability of that evidence for determining the identity of the *daimones*. He also sees a problem in the notion of an alien robe of flesh (fr. 126) where I do not: clearly these are disputes that will need further discussion.

[24] *Daimones* is thus an alternative locution for the individuals in the plural world. Individuals seem to include elemental stuffs (named sometimes as divinities, e.g. fr. 6). Fr. 59 might refer not merely to elements, but to all *daimones* in whatever condition at the relevant stage of the cosmogony.

third-person neuter plurals interchangeable, or alternating, with first-person plural verbs for describing the agency of the set of individuals that are the active participants in Empedocles' cosmic drama. We may speak of everything as 'they' or we may speak of everything as 'we', for 'we' are each one of 'them' now, and we all, birds, fish, rocks, trees, and men and women, belong eventually back together in the Sphere from which we are in exile. In one sense, then, what is probably this book's most startling revelation, or at least the one most startling to those brought up in the old expectations of what the *Physics* said, presents no problem to me, and indeed looks like being all grist to my mill.

I refer to the repeated occasions on which the papyrus, as restored by Martin and Primavesi, uses a first-person plural where the indirect tradition, or closely related passages in the indirect tradition, provided a neuter-plural participle, in such a way that we find ourselves included as participants in the cosmic cycle:

> [Ἄλλ' ἐν μὲν Φιλότητι συνερχό]μεθ' εἰς ἕνα κόσμον
> [ἐν δ' Ἔχθρηι γε πάλιν διεφυ πλέ]ον' ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι . . .
> **(a (i) 6–7)**

In ensembles **a–c** of the new papyrus there are three such occurrences of first-person plurals in compounds of ἔρχομαι expressing the movement towards unity.[25] Two are restored as parts of συνέρχομαι, a verb well attested in the equivalent position in the indirect tradition (though generally in the neuter-plural participle), and the third as a part of εἰσέρχομαι (not paralleled in this context in the indirect tradition, but preferred in **a (ii) 17** by the editors because of the shape of the lacuna).[26] Of these three first-person plural forms transcribed by the first hand (the professional scribe who originally copied the text on to the roll), two have been subsequently 'corrected' by another hand by inserting above the line a variant reading apparently obtained by checking against another manuscript (the identity of the various hands whose alterations appear on the manuscript is discussed on pp. 22–5). In both these cases the variant reading offered is what we should expect from our knowledge of the indirect tradition, namely to read the letter

[25] References are **a (i) 6, a (ii) 17, c 3.**

[26] This reconstruction figures prominently in the theory that the *daimones* are fragments of love. Since I dispute this whole picture of the identity of the *daimones* and of the spatial location of bits of love, I would resist reading εἰσέρχομαι here. See next note.

ν in place of the letter θ so as to produce the neuter-plural participle *συνερχόμεν'* . . ., as in, for example, fr. 17. 7 (quoted above in the text supplied by Simplicius). In the third case, **a (ii) 17** (see above, p. 340), the letter θ stands uncorrected, the first-person plural uncontested, and indeed the syntax as restored by the editors precludes changing the verb to a participle (though it must be said that the line and its predecessor are badly mutilated and the restoration seems to me insecure).[27]

We have, then, two cases where the papyrus testifies to alternative manuscript traditions circulating before the end of the serviceable life of this scroll, one tradition recording the same reading as we know from quotations in the indirect tradition, and the other having an otherwise unattested variant. Are there good grounds for choosing the surprising text, copied first time round by the scribe, rather than the unsurprising text entered by the corrector? Clearly the one uncorrected example weighs in favour of the first-person plural, for if it occurs even once authentically there can be no objection on principle to it occurring on the other two occasions. Yet the solution is not so simple, for the absence of any correction at **a (ii) 17** does not guarantee that none was required; the corrector might have missed one mistake, especially if the editors are right that the syntax demands a present indicative. The presence of two such corrections makes it tempting to suppose that there should have been three.

On the other hand, if we take that route, we have still to explain how the text with the first-person plurals, now supposed to be incorrect, could have acquired them. Clearly this is no slip of the pen; such a systematic recurrence cannot be mere coincidence. Even if the first-person plurals are incorrect, it must be explained as an error behind which a reason lies. Before deciding which text is correct we have to explore what reason there could be for someone systematically to convert the participles to indicatives. This seems to me not adequately done; rather, despite the first-person verbs being more unexpected for them than for my understanding of the *daimones*, and despite the fact that they produce some awkward changes of topic, Martin and Primavesi readily accept the first-

[27] As suggested in the previous note, I am unhappy with the awkward doctrinal implications that hang on this restoration of the line; but the presence of a first-person plural verb, probably a form of *ἔρχομαι* or conceivably of *ἄρχω*, is not in dispute.

person verbs, partly on what strikes me as a misapplication of the *lectio difficilior* principle. Not least among its greater difficulties, I would rank the consequent need to endorse the idea of 'fragments of love' that I have already criticized above. The fact that such a theory had been canvassed forty years ago by Cornford and O'Brien does not by itself recommend the text with the first-person verbs or show that it should be preferred to the text read by the authors of antiquity whose quotations we have been using hitherto.[28]

And there is another consideration that makes one want to hedge one's bets a bit longer on the first-person plurals. Ensemble **d** again manifests emendations (by a different hand) above the line, though this time the variants are placed between a pair of dots, a practice not employed in the supralinear corrections just discussed. One of these, at **d 10,** occurs where the first hand has written

ἡ]μεῖς δὲ λόγων ἐπιβ[ησόμ]εθ' αὖθις

but over the θ of ἐπιβησόμεθ' the corrector has supplied the letter ν between two dots, indicating that he knew of a variant ἐπιβήσομεν. In other words, the second hand suggests changing the middle intransitive ('we shall enter again into the former expressions') into an active transitive ('we shall enter [sc. you] again into the former expressions'). The accusative required as the object of this transitive verb is missing.

This emendation seems inferior both textually, given the missing accusative, and in sense, and I remain mystified as to why Martin and Primavesi have chosen to adopt it.[29] But that is not my main point. What strikes me is the uncanny resemblance between this supralinear alteration and the supralinear letters over συνερχόμεθ' in ensembles **a** and **c.** In the editors' eyes the resemblance is an illusion: 'Le remplacement de ἐπιβ[ησόμ]εθ' par ἐπιβ[ήσομ]εν en **d 10** est d'une nature tout à fait différente' (91 n. 1). The differences are, of course, primarily grammatical (aside from the use of the convention of placing the letter between dots): whereas the variants

[28] As evidence in favour of the first-person readings the editors also emphasize, and rightly so, the fact that the reading of the papyrus at **c 3** solves a syntactical problem in fr. 20 as received from Simplicius, and that the most plausible reconstruction of **a (i) 7** hints at an indicative in **a (i) 6.**

[29] Again, I do not think that the *lectio difficilior* principle should lead us to choose a grammatically incomplete reading requiring a supplement over a syntactically perfect one. To restore the missing accusative the editors supplement thus: ἡ]μεῖς δὲ λόγων ⟨σ'⟩ ἐπιβ[ήσομ]εν αὖθις.

for *συνερχόμεθ'* transformed a present indicative middle to a neuter plural middle participle, the variant for *ἐπιβησόμεθ'* transforms a future middle intransitive into a future active transitive. Because the grammatical effect is different, Martin and Primavesi conclude that the motive behind the original emendation must have been different. It follows, on their view, that we should resist any temptation to see a connection between the ones in **a–c** and that in **d 10**.[30]

Nevertheless, it remains true that the papyrus contains four examples of a first-person plural verb ending in *-μεθα* for which the *θ* is preserved,[31] and for three of them an alternative ending *-μεν* is supplied above the line. The papyrus includes no examples of the ending *-μεν* at any point, other than as a supralinear variant,[32] and this ending is replaced by *-μεθ'* in all the places where comparable lines in the indirect tradition have *-μεν'*. It seems difficult to avoid the inference that a systematic substitution has been applied for some reason, not necessarily a reason that correctly respects the grammatical form in question.

Of course, the systematic substitution might have gone either way. It might be that the first hand worked from an exemplar in which every example of *συνερχόμεν'* had been read as an illiterate *συνέρχομεν* (as though from a verb *συνέρχω*), and 'corrected' by a self-righteous but uncomprehending proof-reader to the middle form. This reader would also have 'corrected' the active *ἐπιβήσομεν* to the middle *ἐπιβησόμεθ'* on the basis of an elementary Greek education that had taught him that the future of *βαίνω* is *βήσομαι*. The subsequent hands would then be collating with an exemplar in which the authentic *-μεν* form was preserved at each point where the first exemplar had been 'corrected'.

Alternatively, the *-μεν* forms might be a systematic but erroneous substitution made by either a semi-literate reader or someone with a philosophical axe to grind. What draws me to this conclusion is the

[30] On the motivation see pp. 309–10. They suggest that the emendation of *συνερχόμεθ'* reflected stylistic worries, a desire for syntactical symmetry in the pairs of lines: their textual critic is a grammarian but not a philosopher.

[31] There is another example provided by the editors in restoring **d 8**, but since the papyrus supplies only]. *ουμ*[it is impossible to say whether the restoration of a middle (rather than active) form is correct, and if so, whether there would or would not have been a variant entered above the *θ*.

[32] There is a group of letters]*μεν*[preserved at **e 4**, apparently in the first foot of the verse, allowing one long syllable to precede it. It would not be possible to restore a form of *συνέρχομαι*, and the parallels for *μεν* in this position in a line suggest that it was not a verb at all.

fact that *ἐπιβησόμεθ'* seems preferable in **d 10** for all sorts of reasons, including the fact that Empedocles generally uses the first-person singular of himself as poet, and that the restoration of a singular *σέ* as the accusative pronoun for the reader is controversial. Yet against that conclusion are other considerations: could the proof-reader have thought there was an active form for *συνέρχομαι*? Can we explain the one unemended example? And indeed, finding *-μεν* throughout in the indirect tradition implies that these were no isolated aberration in one corrupted exemplar.

All things considered, I am far from convinced that the editors' decision to adopt the first-person plural forms at **a (i) 6** and **c 3** is well grounded, despite their fine fit with my own thesis. It is true that other material in the papyrus, especially ensemble **d,** also implies that the history of the *daimones* is 'our' history, and that the history of the cosmos will bear on our future, and be affected by our actions. In one sense, then, to take the opposite decision on the textual dilemma over *συνερχόμεθα* would have no effect on the significance of this papyrus, for even if we did not find first-person plurals at these junctures, they would still be implicit in the message that we find there. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the editors have restored a dative *ἡμῖν* to respond to the dative participle *ἔχουσιν* in **d 4.** It isn't as if a traditionalist could simply restore the neuter plurals to fr. 17 and thereby banish from the physical poem both the *daimones* and their spiritual journey. The surrounding context does explain why a reader might plausibly retain the first-person plurals where we have become accustomed to neuter participles.

Indeed, for all that I have spent so long on the grammar of first-person plurals, the doctrinal content, rather than the linguistic expression, is surely the more exciting aspect of the papyrus. Most of ensemble **a,** the longest section, records lines that are identical to, or near replicas of, lines known from the indirect tradition—frr. 17, 20, 21—and some that closely resemble fr. 35. These are the fragments that give us the main dynamics of the cosmic cycle, and the papyrus confirms that these fragments (or their archetypes—for Empedocles often recycles almost identical words when recycling the same thoughts, and we cannot always tell whether our texts go back to one passage or to a passage and its recapitulation) belong not far apart, in a more or less continuous sequence, in roughly the order Diels put them in, and probably about 300 lines into the poem, in the first book. That part might not seem exciting, but

actually it is: the papyrus can (fortunately) be restored from the testimony of Simplicius because Simplicius, we can now confirm, turns out to be working through much of the same text, and quoting it carefully. This is exciting not just for what we discover about Empedocles, but for what we discover about Simplicius.

In the later lines of the second column of ensemble **a,** and extending into ensembles **b, c,** and **d,** we begin to get new details that Simplicius did not go on to record, but which fill out the context. Lines **a (ii) 23–30,** for example, run through a list of living species that serve to prove something that Empedocles wants to demonstrate: 'From these accounts convey to your mind unerring proofs: for you will see the coming together and the unfolding of the stock' is the English translation offered at the foot of the page for the last two lines of the sequence. 'The stock' might do as a livestock-breeders' term for the idea of starting out with one set of plants or animals and breeding more, for that seems to be what the passage is about. The commentary picks up the cosmic overtones of *ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυξίν τε*, which comes twice in the passage (**a (ii) 24** and **30**) and is translated as 'the coming together and the unfolding'. By this stage we already know that everything is engaged in this pattern of coming together and opening apart, but the striking thing here is that the focus is not cosmic but on reproduction: it is through sexual union that the race unfolds in ever multiplying generations of offspring, and the same effect is visible not only in humans—'the twin offspring of human beings', a carefully chosen expression, reused by Lucretius at 2. 1082,[33] that succeeds in conveying both the sexual differentiation of male and female offspring resulting from human reproduction, and also the idea that the offspring are proliferating as though they were twins—but also (**a (ii) 26**) in the mountain-roaming beasts, and (**a (ii) 28**) in plants that propagate themselves or proliferate by roots or trailing like vines. The whole passage is about exploding populations, or at any rate being fruitful and multiplying. It proves something that Empedocles wants us to *see*, and the most obvious point seems to be that union results in proliferation.

This might be merely a microcosmic illustration of what occurs on a larger scale in the cosmic cycle. The combined effect of love

[33] The confirmation of the reading 'hominum geminam prolem', formerly suspected as corrupt by editors of Lucretius, is a dramatic contribution from the Strasburg papyrus.

holding things in sufficient harmony for them to approach each other, and strife working to increase diversity, means that strife's increase is furthered even while love still has an influence in the period after strife first disrupts the sphere: indeed, it is precisely because things are not wholly at odds that propagation can take place. The claim need not be merely a simile: for procreation itself depends upon a coming together, yet that does not prove that it furthers the work of love—far from it, for the net result is propagation and increasing plurality. We are to observe how strife achieves its ends through procedures that take advantage of a remnant of love's control: nature currently reveals the influence of both forces, though the direction is towards plurality.

The extract placed next by the editors (ensemble **b:** the order is hypothetical) cites more visible proofs (ὄψει is certain in ensemble **a,** confidently restored in ensemble **b** from Plutarch) in the natural forms of animals. Two lines also found in Plutarch seem to be identifiable in **b 2** and **4** (the order is reversed and a further line intervenes in the papyrus); the editors have suggested adding the line placed first in this group by Plutarch as the line immediately preceding the sequence in ensemble **b.** By supplementing these rather battered lines from Plutarch's record we get a passage readable in bits, and if Plutarch is right about the meaning it draws attention to examples in nature where the normal arrangement of the elements is disrupted or confused in animate (and possibly inanimate) features around us: shell-fish, tortoises, and water-snails whose heavier crusts are on the upper or outer surface, and stags with antlers on their heads. Nature's way, then, is not merely to allow the elements to find the place that matches their weight: some other force is producing the complex arrangement that we see around us.

Both **a** and **b** seem to be citing evidence to help us to understand the *current* behaviour of nature, and to situate it in the wider sequence of coming together and breaking apart. That theme continues in **c,** which after the first line duplicates fr. 20 and can be restored, therefore, from Simplicius' text. Simplicius says that Empedocles was showing that love and strife dominate by turns in the behaviour of humans, animals, and fish, and indeed **c 3–6** appear to suggest that we are *formed* by a tendency to unite in love, and *destroyed* by our tendency to disintegrate under strife.[34]

[34] There are, as the editors acknowledge, arguments on both sides for whether this passage refers to the birth and death of each individual, or to cosmic events. The

Simplicius' claim that the passage tells us about the dominance of strife and love ἐνταῦθα[35] (meaning in the sensible world, Simplicius' understanding of what Empedocles would say about the present world) seems to apply not just to this passage but to **a** and **b** as well.

But which bit of the sequence is this, that manifests both forces together accounting for the reproductive behaviour, topsy-turvy construction, and tendency to birth and death of the mortal creatures in our world? If I am right, these passages make no reference to increasing love;[36] rather, biological enquiry reveals the current influence of both love and strife, and that strife's rising influence (what Aristotle meant by saying we are *now under strife*)[37] is concealed behind a veil, drawn by its parasitic use of the remaining influence of love. After starting his poem with the exile of the *daimōn*, Empedocles is still picking out, at lines 300 ff., the visible evidence to support the radical picture into which we are being initiated, a picture of our current plight as exiles in a world driving towards a wretched doom. The notion that another process of moving towards love can and eventually will recur has been hinted at in the image of a cosmos see-sawing between two extremes under the alternation of love and strife, but it cannot have been even sketchily mapped out as yet. It would be an ideal that might be sought in the future, or reconstructed from before the crisis of fr. 115, but it will certainly not be visible in the world around us now.

If this is right, no strong distinction in subject-matter emerges between ensembles **a–c** and ensemble **d,** which clearly continues to look at this world heading for a fearful doom. Indeed, the sense seems to continue almost unbroken from **c** to **d,** and this adds to my doubts over the claim that ensemble **d** derives from the second book.

claim that we can look and see this in the natural creatures round about us suggests to me that the life processes of the individual are being cited (for a general conclusion about shared dominance, of course).

[35] Simpl. *In Phys.* 1124. 9.

[36] Primavesi follows O'Brien in thinking that in **c** lines **3–4** describe increasing love and **5–6** describe increasing strife, so that ensemble **c,** unlike the second part of **a** and **b,** is not a 'look at this world and see where we are' passage.

[37] Arist. *GC* 2. 7, 334^{a}5.

4. The value added: assessing the importance of this material

'Un témoin direct prend ainsi place, pour la première fois, dans la tradition du poète. Ce contact immédiat . . . constitue une chance exceptionnelle' (101). Our final question must be this: why is this such an exceptional piece of good luck? What matters about a direct testimony?

> What matters most about the Strasburg fragments is not the particular interpretation they support, but the simple fact that they are first-hand evidence. Interpreters of the past must yield to hard evidence... For historical issues it really does change things for ever when the quality of the evidence is decisively improved. (Brad Inwood, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 July 1999).

For Brad Inwood it is 'a simple fact' that this papyrus gives evidence that is decisively better than what we had before. Why? He speaks of 'hard evidence', of 'valuing' it over what we had before (which was mere hypothesis), of the 'vital difference' that these fragments make, and of making things that were probable now 'undeniable'. But is this justified as an evaluation of the relative status or reliability of the evidence?

Can there be 'hard evidence' that compels us to yield on an issue of significance? What we count it as evidence for often depends upon our preconceptions of a possible or plausible scenario. It may be fairly clear in some cases what the letters on the papyrus are, just as it is fairly clear what letters Simplicius read in his copy; but the important questions come after that: namely, 'Did Empedocles write it?' and 'What did he mean?' On the second question, the authors of late antiquity generally contribute more than the papyrus, which (at best) transmits an uncommented text.

Does the papyrus give better evidence from which to answer the first question? Are the tattered scraps of a papyrus written six centuries after Empedocles' death a closer record of what he wrote than the lengthy and thorough transcriptions of his lines, read by Plutarch from just such a papyrus (though in rather better shape)? Every 'fact' about this papyrus is scholarly conjecture: its date, its provenance, its intended readership, the identity of its scribe and of the two or more hands that add the alternative versions; even whether it derives from a single roll, or records consecutive verses

of one poem by a single author. By contrast, reading Plutarch, we are well placed with circumstantial evidence from within his extensive corpus to reconstruct his date, his reasons for recording Empedocles' verses, how well he knew his texts, why he cared, and who his readers were. We can meaningfully ask whether he is trustworthy as a witness, and hence evaluate the quality of his evidence. Based on this kind of knowledge, scholarly discussions of Empedocles that explored the wealth of well-documented material in the indirect tradition can scarcely be described as 'thinly grounded hypotheses' in the way that many of the conclusions relating to this papyrus inevitably are.

Suppose we adopt, for the time being, a distinction between primary and secondary evidence. What is this papyrus primary evidence for? It reveals or hints at the location of groups of letters on parts of a written scroll. It also reveals that, by the time this copy was made, scholars had no sure access to what Empedocles really wrote, and were already amending their texts to reflect variant readings. That is about it, as regards the primary historical evidence obtained directly from the material remains before us. Any further deductions, relating to Empedocles himself and his original writings, are made on the basis of hypotheses formed from our earlier attentions to evidence that is not, on any realistic assessment, decisively inferior. So far from becoming undeniable, what was once probable remains just as probable: it becomes plausible, just in so far as the new material accords with hypotheses we were already primed to accept; for had the location of the letters on the scraps we now have before us proved incompatible with everything we know from elsewhere, I trust that we should have recognized the overwhelming need to conclude that the papyrus was a random assemblage of unrelated lines, revealing nothing of the structure of any original Empedoclean text.

So the real question is this: are we better off having found this papyrus in its current state than had we found a new manuscript of a previously unknown Aristotle commentary by Simplicius, in which he quoted and discussed the verses that appear on this papyrus?[38] Clearly not, in my view. For a quotation from Simplicius with its lines complete would plainly be better-quality evidence than the conjectural reconstructions of the beginnings, ends, and middles

[38] Or we might ask, is this addition to our knowledge superior to the addition made when the manuscript of Hippolytus' *Refutatio* was discovered in the mid-19th cent.?

of lines that, though they are the admirable product of Primavesi's and Martin's considerable papyrological and scholarly expertise combined, are still inevitably a kind of educated guesswork. And the commentary that Simplicius offered to accompany the text would, in my view, also assist us immeasurably over the silence surrounding this isolated fragment of a lost papyrus roll. It would not be a hindrance to have Simplicius' thoughts about what it meant—far from it: it would be a great deal more helpful than having to guess whether the material in ensemble **d** dealt with this world or another.

What does papyrology do for ancient philosophy, then? It does not provide us with more scientific proofs or harder evidence, compared with the materials that, by a stroke of even greater good fortune, we are lucky enough to have preserved in an unbroken manuscript tradition, and which we have been able to read for hundreds of years in scholarly texts. Nor does it normally deal any irresistible blow to which our opponents in a philosophical or hermeneutical dispute must yield. In this particular case, with the help of the very fine (and reasonably priced) production of a book that includes all that we need in photographs, facsimiles, transcripts, and reconstructions, scholars are admirably provided with the materials to enable them to make use of this sadly shredded (though once beautifully written) evidence, and to make their own informed assessment of the suggestions of others. Maybe the addition of a few more lines, and the provision of some more faint, but interesting, or even exciting, clues buried in a minefield of doubt and conjecture, might inch us on our way towards a better feel for what Empedocles was talking about. Yet the most remarkable and exciting impact of this discovery, and the one that has perhaps yet to be appreciated by the self-flagellating spokesmen of classical scholarship,[39] is surely its spectacular fit with methodological hypotheses that we had just reached by the use of conventional scholarship—not just that (by an apparently unprecedented coincidence in timing) classical philosophers had no sooner planted their flag on the unity of Empedocles' work than this papyrus brought the papyrologists to the same spot; but, more importantly still, that it shows that we were correct to think that Hippolytus, Plutarch, and the Neoplatonist interpreters

[39] I refer here to the review of this book by Myles Burnyeat, *Times Literary Supplement* (May 28 1999), and to the self-deprecating account that Brad Inwood gives of his own work in the letter cited above.

of Empedocles deserved to be rehabilitated and taken as valuable contributors to our understanding of Empedocles. That confirmation, by a direct testimony that plainly silences the aspersions formerly cast on those ancient authorities who combined the story of the *daimōn* with the story of our physical environment, is our most important reward, because it gives us not just a few new lines but a new security in the value of an extensive body of evidence that we already had, as well as a new (and indeed valuable) testimony to the genuine success of our recent methodological enquiries.

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